

**CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR THE FORMATION OF
FULL HUMANITY: A COMPARATIVE CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF
YI T'OEGYE AND JOHN WESLEY**

A Dissertation

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by

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Abstract

Christian Religious Education for the Formation of Full Humanity: A Comparative Cross-Cultural Study of Yi T'oegye and John Wesley

by Chul Baik

The primary purpose of this dissertation is to search for a more organic view of human beings, especially one which is philosophically sound and theologically authentic. Drawing from Neo-Confucian philosophy and Wesleyan theology, the dissertation offers an integrative model of Christian religious education for the formation of full humanity. To this end, the dissertation is an exploration of the thought and practice of Yi T'oegye (a sixteenth-century Korean Neo-Confucian philosopher, educator, and statesman) and John Wesley (an eighteenth-century British pastor and educator). This exploration can shape the nature and method of Christian religious education today and tomorrow.

Throughout their lifetimes, both T'oegye and Wesley sought for the fullness of humanity. Both of them believed that human beings have capability to actualize their potentials. They also believed that the existential human situation is precarious and in need of restoration to its original nature. They strongly recognized education as the means for restoring the fullness of humanity.

If we agree that the nature of persons is one of the most fundamental issues in formulating a theory and practice of Christian religious education, and that Christian religious education aims toward the ultimate transformation of

humanity, then this comparative, cross-cultural study of Yi T'oegye and John Wesley can help answer the essential questions: What is the nature of humanity?; What is the purpose of Christian religious education?; and How, where, and when do we do Christian religious education?

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A Note on Style and Translation

For guidance in romanizing the Korean and Chinese names and titles and of translating the Neo-Confucian terms, I am deeply indebted to the works done by Edward Y. J. Chung, William Theodore de Bary and JaHyun Kim Haboush, and Michael C. Kalton.¹ The McCune-Reischauer style has been used in romanizing Korean names. However, in this dissertation, the romanized Korean names are used without regard to accepted convention since contemporary Korean scholars do not always follow the McCune-Reischauer system. Especially, Korean names are usually spelled according to the Sino-Korean and Japanese customs, except for the names of contemporary persons living outside Korea, who follow the Western custom. In other words, Korean thinkers, such as T'oegye and Kobong, and other historical figures are initially referred to by the conventional order of the family names and the private given names, followed by the honorific names. The persons of importance are usually referred to by their honorific names (e.g., T'oegye) only.

¹ See "A Note on Style and Translation," in Edward Y. J. Chung, The Korean Neo-Confucianism of Yi T'oegye and Yi Yulgok: A Reappraisal of the "Four-Seven Thesis" and Its Practical Implications for Self-Cultivation (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), xxiii-xxv; "Explanatory Note," in William Theodore de Bary and JaHyun Kim Haboush, eds., The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), vi-x; "Appendix on Terminology," in Michael C. Kalton., trans., To Become a Sage: Ten Diagrams on Sage Learning, by Yi T'oegye (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 211-18.

For romanizing the Korean given names, I followed the accepted style of including hyphens between characters; for example, Yun Chun-keun, not Yun Chunkeun. As for the honorific names, I omitted hyphens between characters; for example, Kobong, not Ko-bong. In this way the readers can distinguish the Korean private names from their honorific names. For the primary and secondary sources cited in this work, only Korean titles are given, as in the standard style.

The Chinese forms are given according to the Wade-Giles system. The titles and terms of the early Chinese Confucian and Neo-Confucian sources in T'oegye's study are given in both Korean and Chinese. When both forms are given, the Korean always precedes the Chinese with a slash in between (e.g., *i/li*).

Consistency in the translation of Neo-Confucian philosophical terms is usually a difficult task because they are subtle and flexible in meaning, depending on their different contexts. For example, the Neo-Confucian term *i/li* is translated as "principle." In both ordinary and philosophical languages, it signifies reason, truth, pattern, and so on. "Principle" is accepted as the best English translation equivalent for the Neo-Confucian understanding of *i/li*. In relation to T'oegye's moral and psychological philosophy, *i/li* is identified also as *song/hsing*, one of the most important terms in Neo-Confucian thought. The term *song/hsing* is translated as "human nature," which is thought to be full of goodness and moral principles.

I use variations when appropriate; for example, the Neo-Confucian term *sim/hsin* is translated as "mind," or even better "mind-and-heart," using them

interchangeably. This is an important term in Neo-Confucianism, as well as in Buddhism and Taoism. It is closely related to their metaphysics and also to their moral and psychological philosophies. Western philosophies often distinguish “mind” from “heart” and thus, “reason” from “emotion,” but from a Confucian perspective, this distinction is neither definite nor clear. In fact, the etymology of *sim* designates the heart; more specifically, the character *sim* itself corresponds to the physical shape of the organ of human heart. This, of course, points to Neo-Confucian wholistic belief in the intellectual, ethical, spiritual, and physical interaction and continuum of the mind-and-heart as a whole. As Michael C. Kalton points out, the heart in the East Asian tradition is “the seat of thought as well as feeling.”² For this reason, T’oegye’s idea of *simhak* is translated as the “learning of the mind-and-heart.”

Another important term, *chong/ch’ing*, is translated in the singular “feeling” in some cases or in the plural “feelings” in other cases, depending on the textual contexts. In the case of *chilchong/ch’i-ch’ing*, I always translate it as the “Seven Feelings” (often abbreviated as the Seven). In the case of *sadan/ssu-tuan*, I always translate it as the “Four Beginnings” (often abbreviated as the Four), although I am aware of its literal meaning as the “four roots” of virtue.

² T’oegye, To Become a Sage, 216.

As for T'oegye's concept of *kyong/ching*, it has been translated as "reverence" or "seriousness." I, however, combine two English translations, "reverence" and "seriousness," into "reverential seriousness," since it means both, as Edward Y. J. Chung points out.³ Therefore, T'oegye's idea of *kyonghak* is translated as the "learning of reverential seriousness." Throughout this work, most Neo-Confucian philosophical concepts are explained within either the text or notes.

³ Chung, xxiv.

Abbreviations

<u>Journal</u>	Wesley, John. <u>The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley</u> . Ed. Nehemiah Curnock. 8 vols. London: Epworth Press, 1938.
<u>Letters</u>	Wesley, John. <u>The Letters of John Wesley</u> . Ed. John Telford. 8 vols. London: Epworth Press, 1931.
<u>Sermon</u>	Wesley, John. <u>John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology</u> . Eds. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.
<u>TGCS</u>	Yi, T'oegye. <u>T'oegye chonso</u> (The complete works of T'oegye). 5 vols. Ed. By The Daedong Munhwa Yunguwon, Sunggunkwan University. Seoul: Sunggunkwan University, 1986.
<u>Works</u>	Wesley, John. <u>The Works of John Wesley</u> . Ed. Frank Baker. Bicentennial ed. 4 vols. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986.
<u>Works of John Wesley</u>	Wesley, John. <u>The Works of John Wesley</u> . Ed. Thomas Jackson. 14 vols. 1872. Reprint. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958-1959.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Problem and Purpose of the Study

An authentic philosophical and theological understanding of human persons is a critical need for theorizing in religious education. Religious education is both an organized and unstructured process in which people are involved with and for one another. This means at least two things: first, it is an action with purpose and intention, not a random activity; second, it is a human activity. If so, one set of questions in the field of religious education has to do with the aims of educational practice. What is the hope for educational formation and transformation of human persons? A second set of questions concerns the people involved in the process of religious educational activity. Who are they? What are their limitations and potentialities for change? Such ultimate questions are largely addressed by one's philosophical and religious beliefs about the nature of persons. Philosophical and theological anthropology, therefore, is one of the most significant factors in determining the theory and practice of religious education.

Throughout this century religious education has been greatly influenced by the social sciences in theorizing its purpose and methodology. Jim Wilhoit, however, argues that social science data must be reexamined if it is to be useful and helpful

to religious education.¹ The empirical evidence of social sciences can merely inform education to a limited extent, especially in developing educational aims and content. The social sciences simply cannot address all the major questions about the nature of persons and world and the purpose of educational transformation of human persons.² Such questions must be addressed through philosophical and theological discourses.

In addition, James Loder explores the dynamics of faith transformation.³ He stresses that the dynamics of faith transcend the predictions described in stage theories of developmental and structural psychology. Rather than focusing on a series of stages, he gives attention to convictional experiences, or transforming moments, through which the believer's entire existence is radically changed.⁴ Loder makes a strong case that the predictable stages of faith stages are not adequate in themselves. An explicit biblical view must be recaptured in examining Christian faith. Susanne Johnson argues this point: "Faith development theory

¹ Jim Wilhoit, "The Impact of the Social Science on Religious Education," Religious Education, 79 (1984): 367-75.

² Ibid., 373.

³ James Loder, The Transforming Moment (Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, 1989), 123-56.

⁴ Ibid., 131-46.

does measure some development phenomena, to be sure, but it does not measure the progress of faith, biblically understood.”⁵

Structural-developmental theory of faith is not irrelevant to religious education; rather, we simply need to rethink our use of it. The simple truth is that we over-rely on social sciences. “The social sciences do not provide a great data bank of answers to all educational questions.”⁶ Philosophical and theological truth must help shape one’s theorizing and designing of Christian religious education, if it is to be authentically Christian and educationally effective.

Another problem explored in this study is what Parker Palmer describes as “the pain of disconnection.”⁷ Palmer argues that, since the advent of atomic physics, physical reality has been seen as particles “floating in an empty void.”⁸ In addition, since the advent of Darwinism biological reality has been seen as isolated individual creatures in “bloody competition.”⁹ These two images of physical and biological reality have created a non-relational humanity which has

⁵ Susanne Johnson, Christian Spiritual Formation in the Church and Classroom (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 120.

⁶ Wilhoit, 375.

⁷ Parker Palmer, To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey (1983; reprint, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993), x.

⁸ Ibid., xiii.

⁹ Ibid., xiv.

been isolated and disconnected, not only from God but also from other people and non-human creatures. For over a century, atomism and a highly developed individualism have been accepted as common sense.

By advanced scientific empirical findings, these two images have been challenged and changed. Among many physicists, “the atom is no longer seen as an independent entity and isolated entity, but as ‘a set of relationships reaching out to other things.’”¹⁰ An isolated and disconnected individual image cannot be claimed as a normal physical and biological reality today. The self is inherently relational and communal in nature. In light of these concerns, a view of human nature is needed that will integrate Eastern philosophy with Christian theology. The need is for an organic and holistic vision for religious education.

The purpose of this dissertation is to search for a fuller view of human beings, which is theologically authentic and philosophically organic. Drawing from Neo-Confucianism and Wesleyan theology, the dissertation offers an integrative model of religious education for the formation of full humanity. To this end, I will examine the educational thought and practice of Yi T'oegye (a sixteenth-century Korean Neo-Confucian philosopher, educator and statesman) and the theology of John Wesley (an eighteenth-century British pastor and educator). This exploration can help shape the nature and method of religious education today and tomorrow.

¹⁰ Ibid., xiv.

Throughout their lifetimes, both T'oegye and Wesley, in different socio-religio-cultural contexts, sought for the fullness of humanity. Both of them maintained that the existential human state is precarious and in need of restoration to its original nature, what Wesley calls "the total restoration of the deformed image of God."¹¹ Issues concerning the original nature of humanity and the means for restoring the fullness of humanity are similarly addressed by T'oegye and Wesley. If we agree that the nature of persons is one of the most foundational issues in formulating the theory and practice of religious education, and religious education aims toward the ultimate transformation of full humanity, then this comparative study of T'oegye and Wesley on human nature is crucial. An anthropology advocated by T'oegye and Wesley can help answer the significant questions: What is the ultimate end of religious education?; what is the nature of humanity? and how, where, and when do we do religious education?

Definitions of Major Concepts

For the sake of discussion, I begin by defining several important terms, such as "model," "Christian religious education," and "the formation of full humanity." A model is a preliminary pattern and plan which we can use in designing the theory and practice of education. As Mary Elizabeth Moore describes it, a "model is

¹¹ Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds., John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 69 (hereafter cited as Sermons).

based on available data about education theory and practice,”¹² Most of the available data for the proposed model in this chapter comes from the traditions of T’oegye and Wesley. Thus, the model appropriates the traditions of T’oegye and Wesley, and has been supplemented with the wisdom of other contemporary educational theorists. In addition, a model is “a pattern for our actions,”¹³ this model offers a new perspective and pattern by which one guides educational ministry for the formation of full humanity.

The model proposed in this chapter is intended to guide Christian religious education. When we use the term religious education, it accurately describes the general investigation of the religious dimension of life and common human quest for a transcendent ground of being. If a religious community uses its specific tradition to sponsor people in their religious quest, and if a particular symbol system and story are offered to express the community’s relationship with a transcendent being, then education is identified with the distinctive religious tradition of the community. For this reason, I have chosen the term Christian religious education because the model proposed here is done by and for a Christian faith community.

¹² Mary Elizabeth Moore, Education for Continuity and Change: A New Model of Christian Religious Education (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 19.

¹³ Ibid.

By describing the aim of Christian religious education as the formation of full humanity, I mean an intentional process of initiation and incorporation into Christian faith and practice, aimed toward the experience of Christian perfection in Wesley's term, or toward sagehood in T'oegye's language. In Wesley's system, the formation of full humanity is a life-long, progressive process in which persons are expected to restore fully their faculties as endowed by the natural image of God; they, therefore, are expected to exercise an unerring understanding of reality, an uncorrupt will to love God and neighbor, and perfect freedom to make good decisions for actions. In T'oegye's system, the formation of full humanity is also a holistic process in which persons are expected not only to experience unity between the self and the universe, but also to act properly in social relationships in accordance with the heavenly principle. Although this is a Confucian principle, it is parallel to a Wesleyan understanding of human growth in relation to God. Accordingly , a model of Christian religious education for the formation of full humanity involves a high level of discipline in intellectual, affectional, moral, and spiritual life.

Thesis and Argument

Thesis: An anthropology based on Yi T'oegye and John Wesley will provide a sound ground upon which human beings can be understood in their fullness and religious education can be designed in its purpose, nature, content, context, and method.

When people ask me about my religious identity, I reply, "I am a Korean Christian, specifically, I am a Korean Methodist." This answer implies two fundamental foundations upon which I have built my being (personality) and activity. The first is the religio-cultural legacy of Korean Neo-Confucianism, which has been dominant in Korea for the last five hundred years. The second is Korean Methodism in which I was born and raised.

Thus, these two traditions are formal and informal influences from which I acquired my identity and views of life. Only within this dual religio-cultural context, whether I like it or not, can I identify myself as a Christian (more specifically Methodist) of Neo-Confucian background and values. For this reason, I have strong personal reason to integrate these two traditions in order to say something about philosophy/theology, learning/teaching theory, curriculum materials, methodology, etc. By doing so, I will propose an educational praxis (as a way of doing Christian religious education) which is deeply relational, reflective, and dialectical with regard to these two heritages.

On the surface, as Julia Ching points out, the two traditions seem to be far from each other in terms of their understanding of humanity.¹⁴ Neo-Confucianism holds the optimistic idea of the perfectibility of humanity in restoring its fullness, while Christianity in general holds the pessimistic idea of the imperfectability of

¹⁴ Julia Ching, Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1977), 68.

humanity and the need of God's salvation. However, my claim is that points of contact do exist between them if we carefully examine the doctrines of humanity advocated by Wesley and T'oegye.

Wesley, in his sermon "Justification by Faith," recognized the paradise-like original nature of humanity and the fallen humanity as well. "In the image of God was made Adam; holy as he that created him is holy...and perfect as his father in heaven is perfect," but falling into sin by disobeying God's command, he fell off from God, and "he was condemned by the righteous judgment of God."¹⁵

Affirming this story as the distinction of Christianity, Wesley believed that persons are born into the world bearing the burden of original sin and guilt. This condition of depravity precedes any action of an individual; it is an affliction of the entire human race.¹⁶ Because of this innate sinful nature, sinners can do literally nothing to save themselves, but they can return to God only in total dependence upon God. Believing the innate sinful nature of humanity, Wesley attested that even children inevitably manifest tendencies to evil growing out of their selfish and rebellious will. Therefore, in his sermon "On the Education of Children," Wesley insisted, "A wise parent...should begin to break their will the first moment

¹⁵ Wesley, "Justification by Faith," in Sermons, 113.

¹⁶ Wesley even made clear his doctrine of the original sin as "the first grand distinguishing point between Heathenism and Christianity." See E. H. Sugden, ed., Standard Sermons, by John Wesley (London: Epworth Press, 1956), 2: 215.

it appears. In the whole art of Christian education there is nothing more important than this."¹⁷

However, Wesley's view of the sinful nature of humanity must not be separated from his understanding of the power of divine grace. Through the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has acted to endow human beings with the capacity to respond to God's offer of salvation. Grace is prevenient; it precedes and invites human choice for good. No person is left helplessly in sin; everyone can turn toward God through repentance by prevenient grace. Through faith, one can come to justification, and finally, to sanctification (toward Christian perfection). As a result, Wesley's attitude toward children appears to have moderated over his years. As Charles Rishell expressed Wesley's view in a 1902 article, "By nature children of wrath, by grace children of God, and the latter is stronger than the former."¹⁸

Such a powerful view of grace caused Wesley to emphasize the crucial nature of Christian teaching and nurturing, which would foster an individual's receptivity to the saving work of God. This shows that Wesley's view of human nature was not altogether negative; after all, human beings are made in the image of God, and

¹⁷ Frank Baker, ed., The Works of John Wesley, Bicentennial ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), 3: 354 (hereafter cited as Works).

¹⁸ Charles W. Rishell, "Wesley and Other Methodist Fathers on Childhood Religion," Methodist Review 84 (1902): 781.

Christ has provided the way and hope for those who have faith in Christ through grace. Education in faith was crucially important for Wesley because it was an instrument by which persons were brought to conversion. But, Christian education and nurture did not terminate with conversion. They were, indeed, instruments of the continual growth in grace toward Christian perfection, which Wesley had envisioned as a realistic possibility in this life. In his sermon "A Thought on the Manner of Educating Children," Wesley summed it up, "The bias of nature is to set the wrong way: Education is designed to set it right."¹⁹

The core of T'oegye's theory of human nature, which is based on Mencius' theory of the original goodness of human nature, was to accomplish the returning to the original human nature through the rectification of the mind. Mencius, in the Book of Mencius, stated that "man's nature is naturally good just as water naturally flows downward."²⁰ In the opening paragraph of the Doctrine of Mean, Chu Hsi, one of the great Neo-Confucian thinkers, also declared that "What Heaven imparts to man is called human nature. To follow our nature is called the Way. Cultivating

¹⁹ Thomas Jackson, ed., The Works of John Wesley, (1872; reprint Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 13: 476 (hereafter cited as Works of John Wesley).

²⁰ Wing-tsit Chan, trans. and comp., A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy (Princeton University Press, 1963), 52.

the way is called education."²¹ These statements imply that the original nature of humanity is understood among Neo-Confucians as "what Heaven imparts to man" and, therefore, "what is inborn in man."²² Thus, human nature is the same as the nature of Heaven, and it is the intrinsic nature of humanity freed from the existential conditions.

Like other Neo-Confucians, T'oegye viewed the original state of human nature to be good because it is that which the "Heavenly Principle" directs.²³ T'oegye kept saying:

Humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom [the Four Beginnings] are the inherent guidelines of human nature [issued by the Heavenly Principle]; in all of these, from the very beginning there is nothing which is not good.²⁴

However, human beings are finite beings having a mind, and therefore, they participate in activities which produce "feeling." The original nature is the state before this activity begins.

In this system, human beings are understood as existential beings, who have fallen from essence into existence with all of the limitations of desires, instincts,

²¹ Ibid., 98.

²² Ibid., 527.

²³ T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 51.

²⁴ Ibid., 66.

ego-consciousness, anxiety, etc. Therefore, the Neo-Confucian sage is one who controls those feelings that cause existential anxieties, and restores his/her original nature as completely as possible. What I have said so far implies that the Neo-Confucian portrayal of human nature is not altogether optimistic; the human mind is precarious and the moral mind is subtle. That is why T'oegye, like other Neo-Confucians, puts so much emphasis on the discipline of the mind and also on the importance of education. Only a strong commitment to self-cultivation can keep persons from straying away from the right path of sage-learning and sage-becoming.

In short, the two traditions of T'oegye and Wesley have points of contact regarding three significant points of anthropology: (1) the recognition that the existential human situation is problematic and in need of restoring the original nature; (2) the belief that the chief end of human persons is to attain the state of Christian perfection or sagehood; and (3) the expectation that education can be a means of continual growth toward that purpose. Thus, an anthropology based on T'oegye and Wesley can provide an insightful description of human nature, and also normative directions concerning the nature, purpose, and method of education.

Method Employed

The research method for this study is library research, comparative analysis, and integrative theory-building. In general, the method includes: (1) description of

the philosophical and theological anthropologies of T'oegye and Wesley; (2) description of the educational theories and practices of the two figures; (3) critical reflection on how the two thinkers' anthropology was appropriated in their educational theories and practices; (4) comparison of the anthropologies and educational theories of T'oegye and Wesley; and (5) construction of an integrative educational theory and practice for the formation of full humanity in today's religiously pluralistic and culturally diverse world.

Resources Used

The principle persons in the Claremont community who have been consulted include: Mary Elizabeth Moore (chairperson of the Guidance Committee), Stephen Kim, and Jack Verheyden. For the study of T'oegye, all writings of T'oegye, with special attention to Sunghaksipdo (the Ten Diagrams on Sage Learning), are used. This is T'oegye's last great work, which was composed as he retired and submitted to the young King Sunjo. This brief work presents the essential framework and basic linkages of Neo-Confucian metaphysics with a theory of mind and with practices for the self-cultivation necessary to attain sagehood. For this reason this work is one of the primary texts in my project. For the study of John Wesley, many writings of Wesley, with special attention to his fifty sermons (selections from the Bicentennial edition of The Works of John Wesley) and his Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament, are the primary sources.

Scope and Limitations

A detailed study of the anthropological views of T'oegye and Wesley and an appropriation of these views for religious education are the primary concern in this project. A socio-historical sketch of the sixteenth-century Korean Neo-Confucian setting in which T'oegye worked and T'oegye's biographical information are reviewed. A very brief sketch of the eighteenth British setting in which Wesley worked and Wesley's biographical information are also reviewed. The primary focus here is on comparative anthropologies. Analyzing the role of "feeling" and "affection" in religious life in the two traditions would be another topic, but a detailed study on this issue will be left for later research.

Contribution of This Study

This dissertation, focused on philosophical and theological anthropology, could help religious educators who take a social scientific approach to religious education. Throughout this century, social sciences have been highly valued as a valuable source of information for religious education; however, the empirical findings of the social sciences are also limited in their contribution. According to Jim Wilhoit, "These are basic or end-of-the-line issues which reflect one's world view and are addressed academically through philosophy and theology."²⁵

²⁵ Ibid., 372.

This dissertation could also help religious educators who study religious education in a context of religious pluralism, particularly within Korean contexts. As we know, the Buddhist-Christian dialogue has been done well in Japan. Thus, it is time for Korean Christian educators to engage in a comparative study of Korean Christianity and Korean Neo-Confucianism. Korean society has been dominated by a vital Neo-Confucian tradition in its practices of life, and also Korea is a country with an especially dynamic Christian faith. For this reason, this cross-cultural and interreligious study can provide insights and guidelines for an integrative religious education model that focuses on transmitting and practicing Christian faith for the fulfillment of humanity in a culturally and religiously diverse situation.

Outline of the Contents

The heart of this dissertation is to present T'oegye's and Wesley's education systems based on their organic and authentic doctrines of humanity, and to propose a integrative model of religious education which will contribute to the ultimate transformation of full humanity. Chapter 2 is a description of T'oegye's life and learning, along with an examination of the historical development of Korean Neo-Confucianism in its socio-political context. Chapter 3 is a study of T'oegye's understanding of humanity, along with an examination of Neo-Confucian understanding of humanity. Chapter 4 is an examination of T'oegye's educational theory and practice. Chapter 5 is a brief description of the socio-political context

of the eighteenth British, along with a brief biographical sketch of Wesley.

Chapter 6 is an examination of Wesley's understanding of humanity. Chapter 7 is an examination of Wesley's educational theory and practice. Chapter 8 presents an integrative model of Christian religious education, based on the anthropological views of T'oegye and Wesley, aiming toward the wholeness of humanity.

Chapter 2

T'oegye's Life and Learning

If we want to understand a person's philosophical anthropology and educational ideas and practices, we cannot ignore socio-religio-historical contexts in which the person was born and reared, and the issues with which the person struggled. We live in history and are shaped by it. For this reason, first this chapter will describe a historical background of Korean Neo-Confucianism, which provided a profound impact on T'oegye's formation of philosophical thought in particular and on Korean religio-socio-political systems and ways of life in general. Second, this chapter will briefly sketch T'oegye's biography and explore the formative influences on T'oegye's philosophical thought and writings.

Socio-Religio-Historical Context

In its historical development, Neo-Confucianism in the Korean peninsula appeared to be unique; that is, its primary concern from its outset was socio-political.¹ The term Neo-Confucianism designates the new thought that arose with the Confucian revival in the Sung period (960-1279) of China and flowed down into modern times. Even though the name Neo-Confucianism denotes the successive phases in the later

¹ For a further explanation of the distinctive characteristics of Neo-Confucianism, see Fung Yu-lan, A Short History of Chinese Philosophy (New York: Free Press, 1966), 266-318, and de Bary and Haboush, Rise of Neo-Confucianism, 1-17.

development of Confucian thought, it also includes metaphysical thoughts of Buddhism and cosmological views of the Taoist religion.

When Yi Sunggye, the founder of the Yi dynasty, ascended the throne in 1392 and finally brought the Koryo dynasty to its close, at his side were a group of Neo-Confucians who supported his power to rise and constructed the ideology of the new dynasty. Under their guidance the new dynasty underwent an ideological shift, which was to have a profound influence upon Korean life for the next five hundred years.

Both Buddhism and Confucianism were introduced to Korea in the late fourth century.² Buddhism had been the principal spiritual and intellectual force in this society, while Confucianism had been a form of professional training in the Chinese classics and in literary form, which was part of the equipment of the civil servant. Buddhism was continuous and widespread, while Confucianism was largely limited to the narrow world of the school and civil service examination system. The Confucian civil service examinations were not the major route to positions of wealth and power in pre-Yi dynasty Korea, nor did Confucian learning function as a decisive arbiter in political and social life. That was to come with the Yi dynasty.

² Chong-hong Park, "Historical Review of Korean Confucianism," in Main Currents of Korean Thought, ed. by The Korean National Commission for UNESCO (Seoul: Sisayongosa, 1983), 60.

Neo-Confucianism was first introduced to Korea during the late period of Koryo dynasty.³ When the Mongol power founded the Yuan dynasty in China (1270-1368), the Koryo dynasty on the Korean peninsula had already been under the Mongol domination for two decades. Diplomatic relationship between the two countries provided the context for the introduction of Neo-Confucianism to Korea. Many Korean intellectuals studied at the capital of Yuan, Beijing and had a chance to learn the new teaching, Neo-Confucianism. Especially, two names, An Hyang (1243-1306) and Paek I-jong (1275-1325), were associated with the introduction of Neo-Confucianism to Korea.⁴

An Hyang was a member of the new elite class of Confucian scholar-statesmen. He believed that the most effective way to confront the entrenched aristocrats and corrupt Buddhists was to follow the Chinese model of adopting Sung Neo-Confucianism as the new state religion and ideology. In 1290, he accompanied King Chungyol on a royal trip to Beijing where he met Chinese Neo-Confucian scholars. After becoming deeply impressed by Chu Hsi's writings, he brought home in the following year, a copy of Chu Tzu chuan-shu (the Complete Works of Master Chu).⁵

³ Park, "Historical Review of Korean Confucianism," 62.

⁴ Sa-soon Yun, Hanguk yuhak sasangron (Discourses on Korean Confucianism) (Seoul: Yeoleumsa, 1986), 17-19.

⁵ Park, "Historical Review of Korean Confucianism," 61.

As a high-ranking government official, he then revitalized the National Confucian Academy to propagate Neo-Confucian learning. He also found it necessary to expand the state schools so that they could overcome the popularity of private academies. For this task, he established a scholarship fund to support state academies and purchased Neo-Confucian texts from China. In recognition of these accomplishments, he was later appointed as the head of the Confucian Shrine. These facts support the view that An Hyang was the first Korean to introduce Neo-Confucianism to Koryo Korea.

According to another view, Paek I-jong brought Neo-Confucianism to Korea in 1314. Paek is considered as “the first Korean to study the Ch’eng-Chu learning” in China, where Neo-Confucianism was flourishing under the state support of the Yuan dynasty.⁶ He stayed with King Chungson in the Yuan capital for about a decade, and there he devoted himself to the study of Sung Neo-Confucianism. When he returned to Koryo, he taught it to some Korean scholars. While An Hyang might not have had sufficient time to study Sung Neo-Confucianism and teach it to Koreans, Paek actually laid the foundation for the transmission of the Neo-Confucian learning by mastering Neo-Confucianism and propagating it in Korea.

At this time, the Koryo government and society were in need of drastic reform. The central government was in a state of severe economic crisis. Its economic crisis was intensified with the extensive land-holdings of the aristocratic families who

⁶ Chung, 6.

dominated the higher level of officialdom and objected to any attempt for land reform. Buddhism, which had been seen as the framework for understanding life and the means of salvation, was also vulnerable to criticism because of its extravagant temple project and of its corruption. In this chaotic socio-religio-political situation, the new learning of Neo-Confucianism offered an alternative base from which critical voices began to be heard.

Most leading Neo-Confucians began to attack Buddhism, criticizing its spiritual and institutional decay. Criticizing the Buddhist monastic life, Chung Mon-ju, for example, said:

The Confucian way is simply about our daily affairs. It is the way of Yao and Shun. The Buddhist teaching is not natural not only because it ignores parents and family and neglects the distinction between men and women, but also because it urges people to sit in caves away from society.⁷

This passage implies that, for Chung, Buddhism neglects the real human life situation, that it misguides the direction of people's lives.

Another serious critique of Buddhism was on economic grounds. For centuries, Koryo scholar-officials were dissatisfied with the political factionalism of the Buddhist institution, as well as with its control over estates, slaves, and financial monopolies. Yi In-jok, for example, demanded that the Buddhist temples

⁷ Ibid., 9.

and their lands and slaves must be subjected to the secular state control.⁸ Kim Cha-su criticized Buddhist rituals for being superstitious, and therefore argued that they should be supervised by the state.⁹ Furthermore, Pak Cho attacked Buddhism in several ways: Buddhism is a religion that distorts human nature and creates evil; Buddhists monks should be subject to military service; and Buddhist texts be destroyed.¹⁰

But the tone of attack on Buddhism was changed by the younger Neo-Confucians such as Chong To-jun (1342-1398, his honorific pen name is Sambong) and Kwon Kun (1352-1409, his honorific pen name is Yangchon). The attacks on Buddhism were no longer around its building project and its corruption caused by unworthy Buddhist monks. Rather, it focused on the notion that Buddhist teachings were false and that the Buddhist way of life was fundamentally wrong. Chong To-jun wrote two essays, Simgi ipyun (On Mind, Material Force, and Principle) and Pulssi chappyun (Arguments Against the Buddha), criticizing Buddhism in light of Neo-Confucianism.¹¹ Simgi ipyun is a critical comparative analysis of Taoism, Buddhism

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ For general information about Chong To-jun's life and thought see Sambongjip (The collected works of Chong To-jun) (Seoul: Kuksa pyunchan wiwonhoe, 1961); and Chai-sik Chang, "Chong To-jun: Architect of Yi Dynasty

and Neo-Confucianism in which Chong quotes Confucius, Mencius, and Chu Hsi to criticize both Taoism and Buddhism.

Chong's main argument is that Neo-Confucianism is metaphysically and ethically superior to the other two traditions which are based on false teachings. The Buddhist method of self-cultivation is too much concerned with what he calls the subjective calmness of mind, ignoring the objective reality of things, society, and culture. The Taoist teaching of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu are charged with emphasizing only the attainment of physical longevity by means of nourishing *ki/ch'i* or material force. Chong concluded that the Neo-Confucian learning of human nature and principle is more valuable in the context of not only integrating both Buddhist and Taoist teaching, but also emphasizing the objective reality of learning, self-cultivation, and socio-political orders.¹² The Pulssi chappyun is a more systematic critique of Buddhism, one that presents Neo-Confucianism as the orthodox tradition of learning and self-cultivation, defending Ch'eng-Chu metaphysics and ethics.¹³ Chong addressed the following points. First, he argued that the Buddhist ideas of *karma* and its implications for reward and punishment are wrong and immoral. Second, he

Government and Ideology," in de Bary and Haboush Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea, 59-88. The last part of the Simgii pyun is translated by John B. Duncan in Peter H. Lee, et al., eds., Sourcebook of Korean Civilization (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 1: 454-58.

¹² To-jun Chong, Sambongjip, 280-88.

¹³ Ibid., 256-69.

claimed that the Buddhist theory of knowledge neglects objective principles because it regards the phenomenal world only as an illusion. Third, he argued that Buddhist ethical-spiritual teachings on the method of self-cultivation are focused too much on emptiness of the mind, ignoring the family and society.

In addition to Chong, Kwon Kun was an important Neo-Confucian scholar, a former dean of the *Sunggyungwan* who helped the new government in establishing Neo-Confucianism as the foundation of its state religion and ideology. Kwon was a close friend of Chong To-jun. Like Chong, Kwon used Ch'eng-Chu Neo-Confucian doctrines to criticize Buddhism. He argued that Buddhism is partial, whereas Neo-Confucianism is complete and the Confucian virtue of filial piety is the greatest virtue to be cultivated and put into practice. In his view, Neo-Confucianism is superior to Buddhism because it perfects both substance and function; that is to say, its way of self-cultivation integrates inner life and outer life. Thus, he emphasizes the unity of knowledge and action in learning and self-cultivation.¹⁴

Kwon's most famous work is the Iphak tosol (Diagrammatic Treatise for the Commencement of Learning), the first systematic formulation of Neo-Confucian metaphysics and ethics in Korea. It consists of twenty-six diagrams relating to the

¹⁴ For general information on Kwon Kun's life and thought, see Yangchonjip (The collected works of Kwon Kun) (Seoul: Minjok munhwa chujinhoe, 1979). See also, Michael C. Kalton, "The Writings of Kwon Kun: The Context and Shape of Early Yi Dynasty Neo-Confucianism," in Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea, eds. De Bary and Haboush, 89-123.

Five Classics, Four Books, and Sung Neo-Confucian writings.¹⁵ The first diagram is the Chonin simsong habil to (Diagram of the Unity of and Oneness of Heaven, Human Beings, Mind, and Nature); it is especially significant since it summarizes the basic teachings of Neo-Confucian metaphysics, ethics, and psychological theory.¹⁶ Presenting Ch'eng-Chu teachings, it mentions, for the first time in Korea, the ideas of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom that pertain to the "Four-Beginnings"; moreover, it lists the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hatred, and desire, and it briefly describes them in terms of principle (*i/li*) and material force (*ki/ch'i*). In Korea, Kwon Kun was then the first Neo-Confucian who spoke of the Four-Seven topic. As we will see in the next chapter, this diagram had some influence on the initial stage of the Four-Seven debate.

Such an attack on Buddhism implies a radical alternative: founding a new dynasty on Neo-Confucian principles, ideology, and practice. As we have seen, to Chong and his fellow Neo-Confucian scholar-officials, Neo-Confucian metaphysics, moral teachings, and political ideologies were an effective alternative to the corrupt Buddhist

¹⁵ For the Iphak tosol in original Chinese, see Chong-ho Pae, ed., Hanguk yuhak charyo chipsong (The collected source materials on Korean Neo-Confucianism) (Seoul: Yonsae University Press, 1980), 1: 3-17.

¹⁶ For this diagram in the original Chinese, see Chong-ho Pae, Hanguk yuhak charyo chipsong (The collected source materials on Korean Neo-Confucianism), 1: 77-88. For a good discussion of this diagram, see Kalton, "Writings of Kwon Kun," 107-13.

tradition of the Koryo dynasty. Neo-Confucianism provided a concrete and practical way to govern the country including socio-political, educational, and spiritual matters. Chong, as a brilliant political and military tactician, as well as an outstanding Neo-Confucian scholar, was the leader of younger Neo-Confucians. He contributed much to the radicalization of opinion that made dynastic change possible by criticizing Buddhism and Taoism, and explicating the True Way of Confucianism. The coup Chong engineered was a Neo-Confucian revolution. What mattered was not the man who became the ruler, Yi Sunggye. What counted was the foundation of a new government and society, which was shaped in terms of Neo-Confucian principle and value.¹⁷

To what extent was Neo-Confucianism compatible with the social and political conditions of the Koryo-Yi dynastic transition? Undoubtedly, the first step for scholar-officials was to establish it as the state religion and political ideology by giving an ethico-spiritual and political justification for the new dynasty's legitimacy. For the new elite class, it meant a renewed commitment to China and its Confucian tradition. For example, Chong and Kwon supported the new dynasty to promote the Ch'eng -Chu school. They argued that because the old dominance of Buddhism was morally and spiritually corrupt, cultural progress must involve a reform to bring about

¹⁷ Sa-soon Yun, Hanguk ui seongihak kwa silhak (Korean learning of principle and practical learning) (Seoul: Yeoleumsa, 1987), 12.

moral, social, and political order according to Confucian principles. Their rejection of a Buddhist worldview was not a difficult matter in an environment whose culture had already been considerably Confucianized from early times.

Why did this generate such enthusiasm and conviction in the Korean context? As we have seen in Chong's and Kwon's writings, Neo-Confucianism was considered as the new intellectual, ethical and spiritual guide for scholar-officials to sustain a centralized, bureaucratic Confucian state. They found an inseparability between Neo-Confucian scholarship and politics. Moreover, Neo-Confucian ethics emphasize the essential link between learning, self-cultivation, family regulation, social harmony, political order, and cultural prosperity. To scholar-officials, it represented a cultural universalism based on the harmony of the natural, social, and political orders, which reflects the secular as sacred. The Korean Neo-Confucians, such as Chong, Kwon, and their fellow men in the early Yi dynasty, took the socio-political order as another source of the locus of sacredness. They saw no separation between the religion and the state, as well as no room for any utopian-spiritual world outside the world of here and now. In other words, the state itself assumed a good deal of ethico-religious significance. To them, Neo-Confucian metaphysics and moral teachings, and political ideologies were an effective alternative to the corrupt Buddhist tradition of the Koryo dynasty, one that had a concrete and practical way to govern the country and including educational, social, and spiritual matters. This was addressed in the light of what Neo-Confucianism calls *kyoungse* (to manage the world), *chemin* (to save the people).

Let us briefly examine the influence of Neo-Confucianism on the socio-educational life in this period. With the establishment and spread of Neo-Confucianism, the civil service examination system, which had already been practiced in the Koryo dynasty as a way of recruiting government officials, took on a more central role in the Choson dynasty.¹⁸ The Neo-Confucian literati had great socio-political power in the entire society. They constituted *yangban*, the privileged two orders of civil and military officials. The term *yangban* distinguishes these people from other social classes. Marriage between *yangban* and lower classes was prohibited. As a result, social classes of literati and commoners were strictly separated according to birth and lineage. Occupational distinctions maintained the hierarchical order with the *yangban* class occupying the highest place. Rights and duties were prescribed for each group by law. The elite class enjoyed political, social, and cultural privileges; its men became government officials through civil-service examination or by the merit of their ancestors to the state.

To protect common interests of the whole *yangban* class, the early Choson dynasty found it wise to put primary emphasis on state examinations. From the early fifteenth century, Confucian education became a primary gateway to personal and family success. Although any commoner of free-born status theoretically was allowed to

¹⁸ The terms the Yi dynasty and the Choson dynasty have been interchangeably used. The Yi dynasty denotes the last name of the royal family,

take examinations, the *yangban* quickly monopolized the state examination system; the financial and educational opportunities to attend Confucian academies and to prepare for the examinations were available almost exclusively to the sons of the *yangban* class.

These examinations were conducted at two levels; lower examination or *sokwa* and higher examination or *taekwa*.¹⁹ The former included the classics licentiate examination (*sanwon si*) on the Five Classics and the Four Books and the literary licentiate examination (*chinsa si*) on skill in composing such Chinese literary works as poetry, documentary prose, and problem essays. Texts used in the examinations also included Neo-Confucian commentaries, histories, and other books. The most important ones among the Neo-Confucian texts were the Sung-li tae-chun (Great Compendium on Human Nature and Principle), Chu Hsi's Sohak (Elementary Learning), Guensa rok (Reflections on Things at Hand), and the Saseo jipju (Collected Commentaries on the Words and Phrases of the Four Books).²⁰ Neo-Confucian scholars-officials were very eager to establish a thoroughly Confucian society on the

while the Choson dynasty connotes the name of the government that lasted for the five centuries just before the Japanese colonization.

¹⁹ For an examination of the system of the Chosun dynasty, consult Yi Song-mu, "The Influence of Neo-Confucianism on Education and the Civil Service Examination in Fourteen and Fifteenth-Century Korea," in Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea, eds. de Bary and Haboush, 59-88.

²⁰ Chung, 15-16.

basis of the state examination and education system. However, as they began to accumulate more political power throughout the country, this soon led to the severe purges of Neo-Confucian literati.

During this period, the focus of attention was much more on the public than on the personal face of Neo-Confucianism, on institutional and pragmatic value rather than on metaphysics and inner self-cultivation. Because of their preoccupation with socio-political concerns, Korean Neo-Confucianists in the fifteenth century offered little regarding philosophical or metaphysical thought, which was to flourish in the following century.

The term *sarim*, literally meaning “forest of literati,” came into prominence in the history of Korean Neo-Confucianism after the first two bloody political clashes, which were known, along with two later ones in the sixteenth century, as *sahwa*, or “literati purge.”

In the early sixteenth century Korea, *Sarim* became a term to designate the righteous oppressed by *kwanhak*, who were the politically established and particularly the most senior officials. Most of the *kwanhak pa* or “bureaucratic learning faction” termed by modern historians, came from families that attained wealth and power as the result of “merit subject” status awarded for service to the throne at the beginning of the Yi dynasty, at subsequent enthronements, or at the time of crisis. Common human tensions were involved in the *sarim-kwanhak* clash: younger vs. elder, newcomers vs. established, idealists vs. pragmatists.

During King Sonjong's reign (1469-1494), many rural Neo-Confucian intellectuals were appointed to high-ranking government positions. In the southeastern Kyungsang province, a few Neo-Confucians carried on the teachings of Kil Chae, a follower of the late Koryo scholar-official Chong Mong-ju, who had retired to his home province. Like their spiritual masters, Chong and Kil, these men remained faithful to the declining Koryo court, refusing to accept any government positions under the Yi Songgae faction. Their leading figures were Kim Jong-jik (1431-1492), Kim Koeng-pil (1453-1504), and Chong Yo-chang (1449-1504). Their scholarship was generally based on an idealistic philosophy of learning and self-cultivation, one that significantly differed from the statecraft tradition of scholar-bureaucrats in the capital. They made their appearance and exerted their political influence on the central government when King Songjong appointed these *sarim* Neo-Confucians in an effort to prevent the further expansion of the dominant power of the court aristocrats. Consequently, severe political conflict developed between the two forces: the Neo-Confucian literati and the aristocrats in the central bureaucracy. This then led to a series of political events known as *sahwa*, which continued from the mid-fifteenth century to the early sixteenth century.

Under the power of the tyrannical king Yonsangun, the first two purges of 1498 (known as *muo sahwa*) and 1504 (known as *kapcha sahwa*) resulted in the banishment and death of many members of the aristocratic elite, as well as numerous *sarim* Neo-Confucian scholars. By the advent of the king Chungjong's reign, moralistic idealism

in the traditional Neo-Confucianism prevailed. The *sarim* now became a fully self-conscious movement. At its head was the charismatic and brilliant young scholar Cho Kwangjo. His learning and force of character completely won Chungjong's confidence and it brought him strong political power and influence. Cho believed that the ultimate test of truth is always to be discovered in human affairs and human history.²¹ Cho's primary political objective was a rational reform of the state in accordance with the Neo-Confucian ideal. For example, he proposed the village code (*hyantgyak*),²² a model of local government; encouraged the translation of basic Confucian writings to promote its moral and social teachings among the populace at large; and put into practice a much more simplified examination system for recruiting men of virtue.²³ As his political power grew quickly, a great number of Neo-Confucian scholars who supported Cho were appointed to high-ranking government official positions, and his reform group became known as the school of political

²¹ Ibid., 54.

²² For this subject, consult Sakai Tadao, "Yi Yulgok and the Community compact," in Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea, eds. de Bary and Haboush, 323-48.

²³ The village code was embodied basically in four objectives: mutual encouragement of Confucian morality, mutual supervision of wrong doings, mutual observance of social relationships, and mutual help in times of trouble and disaster. It was later developed further by such scholars as T'oegye and Yulgok.

though.²⁴ However, the aristocratic families managed to get rid of him and his reform faction. This political event was the third literati purge of 1519 (known as *kimyo sahwa*). Another literati purge occurred in 1545 after a series of factional events surrounding the successive enthronement, which once again broke the political power of the Neo-Confucian scholar-officials.

The circumstances of these four persecutions of Korean Neo-Confucianism differed in each case, but their major cause was the factional struggle for political power between the aristocratic class and the Neo-Confucian elite. The latter suffered a setback as victims in this political strife; however, the result was not entirely unfruitful because most of them retired to their home regions and continued to build private academies (*sowon*) for promoting Confucian scholarship. With their solid bases in the countryside, the power of the Neo-Confucian literati became stronger. In fact, these Neo-Confucians controlled the village codes, thereby solidifying the economic, social, and political power in their own regions.

The Paegundong Academy is the most famous *sowon* established in the Yongnam region in 1543. It adopted the rules that Chu Hsi laid down for his White Deer Hollow Academy or Pai-lu-tung Academy in Sung China.²⁵ Obviously, the Korean

²⁴ Sang-yun Hyun, *Choson yuhaksa* (A history of Korean Confucianism) (1948; reprint, Seoul: Hyonumsa, 1982), 47-49.

Neo-Confucian scholars built the *sowon* as something that came to occupy a significant position in Choson society exactly like that maintained by the Buddhist temples in the Koryo period. It must be emphasized, therefore, that, during the difficult period of the literati purges, they found in these private academies the hope for laying the intellectual basis for a vigorous and idealistic moralism that focused on the absolute centrality of moral self-cultivation and exclusive commitment to the True Way. By doing so, they could actualize the True Way in daily life experiences and conduct proper social relationships.²⁶ Thus, the bloody political clashes between *sarim* and *kwanhak* highlighted the ascetical, meditative, and self-cultivating aspects of the Ch'eng-Chu tradition. At the same time, they found in these private academies the hope for their return to political power.

Unfortunately, however, another historical fact is that most private academies gradually became stronger breeders of political and intellectual factionalism. Nevertheless, they served as the important local centers for Neo-Confucian education and scholarship through which many retired scholars were able to make a significant progress in the study of Ch'eng-Chu's teachings from the middle of the sixteenth century. Indeed, during this period, the most glorious period in the entire history of Korean Neo-Confucianism, many eminent thinkers emerged, including T'oegye.

²⁵ For the subject of private academies in Korea, consult T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 114-17.

²⁶ Ibid., 13-14

Cho Kwangjo failed politically, but his martyrdom made him a permanent symbol of *sarim* values and commitment to morality and self-cultivation.²⁷ With his downfall the *sarim* movement was for a time eclipsed, only to emerge half a century later finally victorious. The *sarim* movement won general acceptance as the orthodox core of Korean Neo-Confucianism. This left a distinctive imprint upon subsequent Korean Neo-Confucians who tried to grasp the interlinked intellectual, metaphysical, ascetical, moral, and self-cultivation dimensions in Korean Neo-Confucianism. The central figure in this development was T'oegye.

Even though T'oegye had no direct connection with Cho Kwang-jo, the former was one of the spiritual heirs of the *sarim* movement. Throughout his life, T'oegye tried to reconstruct the fundamental elements of Ch'eng-Chu teachings and hold the *sarim* values that emphasized the moral concern and self-cultivation. The socio-religio-political context we have described set the milieu of T'oegye's life and thought. He was in his teens when the *sarim* movement became the center of attention and hope.

Biographical Sketch

Yi Hwang is commonly known by his honorific name, which he took from the site of his scholarly retreat in later years, T'oegye, and often referred to as the Master Chu Hsi of Korea. Tu Wei-ming calls T'oegye "a major source of inspiration for creative

²⁷ Ibid., 51-55.

scholarship on Confucian philosophy and its modern scholarship.”²⁸ The contemporary Japanese scholar Abe Yoshio considers T'oegye as “the greatest scholar of the Ch'eng-Chu school in Korea. T'oegye was the first Korean thinker who studied Neo-Confucianism thoroughly while writing many significant works.

T'oegye's biographical chronology, as Lee Sang-eun aptly describes, can be divided into three periods: (1) the period of self-learning and development (1501-1533); (2) the period of public service (1534-1549); and (3) the period of teaching in seclusion (1550-1570).²⁹

T'oegye was born as the youngest son of Yi Sik, a *chinsa*,³⁰ in the village of On'gye-ri, Yean-hyon (now T'oegye-dong, Tosan-myun, Andong-gun), North Kyoungsang Province, on November 25, 1501, in the seventh year of the reign of King Yonsan of the Yi dynasty.³¹ When T'oegye was only seven years old his father died, leaving his wife to raise seven sons and a daughter by farming and

²⁸ Wei-ming Tu, “Yi Hwang's Perception of the Mind,” *T'oegye hakpo* 19 (1978): 67.

²⁹ Sang-eun Lee, *T'oegye ui sangae wa hangmun* (T'oegye's life and learning) (Seoul: Seoomoon moongo, 1977), 11-61.

³⁰ *Chinsa* is the title conferred on a scholar who passed the civil service examination in the literary department.

³¹ Most of the following biographical information about T'oegye is taken from “T'oegye's Chronological Biography (yonbo)” found in *T'oegye chonso* (The complete works of T'oegye), ed. by The Daedong Munhwa Yunguwon,

silkworm raising at a time when severe taxation drove many families to impoverishment and bankruptcy.³² At that time, the children of a widow were commonly supposed as being devoid of education; therefore, T'oegye's mother constantly exhorted her children to be outstanding in learning and in behavioral conduct.³³ The influence of his mother on T'oegye's formation of philosophical thought and educational principles and practices was by no means insignificant.

T'oegye's father had a large collection of books, inherited from his deceased father-in-law, and he could read extensively the works of great thinkers. He constantly admonished his children, "I read books even at meals, I see them in dreams, I am with them when I sit or when I walk, I never left them. You should do as I do. If you while away time without reading them, when can you attain your aspiration."³⁴ Thus, T'oegye was born and raised in a scholarly environment, though his family was not well-off economically.

Sunggunkwan University (Seoul: Sunggunkwan University, 1986), 2: 553-620. Hereafter T'oegye chonso (The complete works of T'oegye) is cited as TGCS.

³² For age, I have adhered to the traditional Korean and Chinese method of counting. That is, the child is said to be one year old at birth and a year is added on each lunar new year. One should subtract at least one year to convert to the Western equivalent.

³³ Sun-keun Lee, introduction to TGCS, by Yi T'oegye, 1: ii.

³⁴ Chong-hong Park, "T'oegye and His Thought," in Main Currents of Korean Thought, ed. by The Korean National Commission for UNESCO (Seoul: Sisayongosa, 1983), 84.

Under their parent's influence, all of the children, except for two who died early, studied with diligence, and as a result they made a success in learning and brought honor to their family. Especially, the youngest one, T'oegye, grew up as the greatest thinker in the history of Korean Neo-Confucianism.

At the age of six, T'oegye started to learn the Book of One Thousand Letters from an old gentleman in the neighborhood. Dressing himself spotlessly clean, the little child, T'oegye used to visit his teacher early in the morning, presenting himself only after he had succeeded in committing to memory what he had been assigned on the previous day. His manner was so solemn that he impressed all who saw him.³⁵

T'oegye, at the age of eleven, learned the Analects from his uncle, Yi U (Songjae by pen name) who held the posts of Andong magistrate and Kangwon governor. One day while reading the Analects, T'oegye was attracted by the meaning of *li*.³⁶ After having deep thinking about the meaning of *li*, he asked his

³⁵ Sun-keun Lee, T'oegye Life and Learning, 22-23.

³⁶ *I/li* is one of the most important terms in the Neo-Confucian school. Briefly, it can be described as the ground-providing principle of human beings and all things which maintain their orderly and harmonious movement; thence, *i/li* is responsible for making things be as they are and act as they do. In this respect Neo-Confucians equate *i/li* with the inherent nature of each and every being. While *i/li* is the inherent nature and norm of particular beings, from another perspective it may be regarded as a single underlying pattern that embraces all things as a harmonious whole and serves as the norm for their appropriate

uncle, "Does the rightness of a thing constitute its meaning?" His uncle was very pleased with such a question and praised his nephew by saying, "You have already grasped the meaning of the word."³⁷

Speculative and quiet by nature, T'oegye loved reading and studying. Even in his early age of fourteen he loved sitting quietly facing the wall in order to reflect on his reading while those around him were socializing. Having read of the Book of Changes at the age of 19, he almost forgot even to eat and sleep in order to inquire into its true meaning. As a result of such an excessive reading, he ruined his health and eventually suffered from life long indigestion and eye disease through the remaining years of his life.³⁸

T'oegye married at twenty, and remarried at twenty-nine, having lost his first wife shortly after she gave birth to their second son.³⁹ He came to Seoul when he was 22 years old and entered the Confucian National Academy, *Songgyungwan*. As a byproduct of the purge of Neo-Confucian scholars in 1519, his fellow students were little interested in serious study. T'oegye, who presented a mark of

interaction. A further detailed explanation of *i/li* will be explored later in this work.

³⁷ Chong-hong Park, "T'oegye and His Thought," 83.

³⁸ Sa-soon Yun, T'oegye sunjip (The selected writings of T'oegye) (Seoul: Hyunamsa, 1982), 12.

³⁹ Sang-eun Lee, T'oegye's Life and Learning, 26-27.

moderate words and deeds, was jeered as an object of mockery by his fellow students.

In 1527 and 1528 he passed the two lower level civil service examinations. This was enough to maintain the family's tradition of learning. Actually he had no intention to take the final and higher civil service examination which would lead to an official career. His brother Hae, however, passed the final exams in 1528 and embarked upon an official career, and pushed his mother to persuade his younger brother to do the same. T'oegye could not refuse, and in 1534 he passed the final exams, making the first step into civil service.⁴⁰

T'oegye served government offices for the next 15 years, rising gradually up to a position of junior third rank. As his official titles show, T'oegye was appointed to the offices concerned with drafting royal documents, recording and editing dynastic history, writing documents addressed to the Ming court, and lecturing Confucius classics to the kings and crown princes and teaching at The Confucian National Academy. In a word, he held the positions that utilized his scholarly and literary talents.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ For the record of T'oegye's civil services, consult Sang-eun Lee, T'oegye's Life and Learning, 32-42.

It is not true, however, that T'oegye, after his age of 49, lived in seclusion. As his biographical records indicate, he was summoned by the four kings (Chungjong, Injong, Myungjong, Sonjo) to serve various illustrious positions and accepted some of them in irresistible cases. Despite such requests of the kings, it was not his life long aspiration to spend his whole life in public service. Therefore, he submitted over 53 letters of resignation to the kings until his last days. One of his poems can reveal his true mind: “Alas, people in the secular world / Do not cherish high office.”⁴² In his poem written when he turned 56 years of age, he also likened wealth and fame to drifting smoke and honors to a fly in the air.⁴³ Furthermore, he described his life during those 15 years of his active participation in public service as follows, “I was immersed in the dusty world without a day’s leisure, and there is nothing else worth mentioning.”⁴⁴

During the period of his public services, he established a reputation as a conscientious official and a man of integrity. In 1524, T'oegye, as a royal secret inspector, ruthlessly accused a provincial official of neglecting an order from an honest magistrate and possessing government articles. He gave the advice to the king that only after punishing corrupt government officials would it be possible to

⁴² Quoted in Chong-hong Park, “T'oegye and His Thought,” 85.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ T'oegye, TGCS, 1: 282.

save the people from destitution. It is also noticeable that in 1545 he stood almost alone in claiming a peaceful diplomatic relationship with Japan, rightly assessing the potential for disaster from Japan.⁴⁵ In a lecture to the king when he was 68 years old, T'oegye resolutely defended the scholarship and personality of Cho Kwang-jo, the scholar-statesman who was purged in the scholar's persecution, and clarified that the incident was an outcome of an intrigue by Nam Gon and Sim Chong. The king finally deprived Nam Gon of his office and rank.⁴⁶ Such instances revealed his consistent courage and integrity.

In any case, it was not a period in which an idealist could hope to accomplish much. The decades that followed the downfall of Cho Kwangjo were characterized by a dreary succession of power brokers. The fervent self-cultivation orientation symbolized by Cho was viewed with suspicion and men like T'oegye were well advised to keep a low profile. Within a few decades he was to become famous as the foremost scholar of Ch'eng-Chu thought and outstanding representative of the School of the Way or *dohak*, but during this period, as a disciple remarked, "even his friends did not realize he was a Confucian of the

⁴⁵ In 1592 and again in 1597 Korea was devastated by large-scale Japanese invasions.

⁴⁶ Chung, 17.

School of the Way,"⁴⁷ and another commented that most thought of him primarily as a poet.⁴⁸

In fact, the scholarship that was to bring him fame was a later accomplishment, beginning in earnest with his years of retirement after 1549. His love of learning was constant, but the circumstances of his life and time deprived him of the opportunity for teachers or intercourse with learned friends. In 1543 the Chu Tzu ta-ch'uan (Chu Hsi's Complete Works) was finally printed in Korea. T'oegye did not know such a book existed, and now burned with a desire of immersing himself in its study.⁴⁹ He served in a total of twenty-nine official positions in which he utilized his scholarly and literary talents. Although he carried out his official posts sincerely, he always wanted to retire since he had no political ambition. His decision to resign from public life dated from this time.

His resolve to resign from public life was coupled with the distasteful political climate.⁵⁰ In 1539 the oppressive political atmosphere began to change and *sarim* figures again found their way into government. But the rival factions gathered around the uncles of Chungjon's two potential heirs. Chung died in 1544, and

⁴⁷ T'oegye, TGCS, 2: 872.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 2: 871.

⁴⁹ Chung, 24.

⁵⁰ Sang-eun Lee, T'oegye's Life and Learning, 55-61.

was succeeded by Injong, but Injong died only after 8 months and was succeeded by Myungjong. This reversal brought on the final literati purge of 1545 and 1546, for the majority of the literati had been arrayed against the faction of Myungjong's uncle, Yun Won-hyung. Myungjong was a just boy when he ascended the throne, and Yun and his faction dominated the political scene for the next twenty years.⁵¹

T'oegye's name was on the list of 1545 purge, but it was removed when someone in Yun's faction defended him. However, the aftermath of the purge touch him painfully, when in 1550 his brother Hae was sentenced to beating and exile, and died from the severity of the beating. In 1549, after three resignation requests, in which he gave a number of reasons including a chronic illness, old age, lack of knowledge, and so on, sent to the province governor went unanswered, T'oegye finally packed up his bags and left his posts as magistrate of Tan-yang and Punggi counties.⁵² The result was a reprimand and a two grade reduction in rank, but that meant little to T'oegye. T'oegye, as mentioned early, had never really desired an official career. Now his life-long longing for an opportunity to immerse himself in study, coupled with a strong distaste for the political climate, overrode all other considerations. Finally, his period of scholarly retirement had begun.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

Students quickly gathered around him at the retreat he had prepared at T'oegye (renamed T'oegye), a stream not far from his birthplace.⁵³ He built more ample quarters for students on Tosan, a neighboring mountain, where he moved in 1561.

However, T'oegye was not allowed to retire and fully immerse himself in studying and teaching. From 1552 to 1555 he was again in office, and again served for five months in 1558. After the downfall of Myongjong's uncle, T'oegye's friends and disciples soon began to fill the government's offices. Hearing reports that his friends urged the young successor the King Sonjo to appoint him prime minister, he fled the capital without notice. Pressure continued, however, and he returned to accept a position in the royal lectures. His stay of eighth months produced two famous documents, the Six Section Memorial advising the young ruler on fundamental, matters of conduct and policy, and the Ten Diagrams on Sage Learning, a summation of Neo-Confucian learning proffered to the king on the eve of T'oegye's return to retirement.⁵⁴

For seven years from early 1559 to late 1566, T'oegye carried on his Four-Seven correspondence with the young bright scholar Ki Kobong (1529-1592).⁵⁵ In this debate, he formulated a highly sophisticated philosophy of mind, human

⁵³ Ibid., 66.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 87.

⁵⁵ T'oegye's Four-Seven letters are found in T'oegye Yi, TGCS, 1: 405-42.

nature, and feelings in relation to the Neo-Confucian metaphysics of *I* and *ki*.

Soon the debate generated a great deal of scholarly and philosophical controversy, setting the philosophical agenda for generation to come. T'oegye's Four-Seven thesis is the best source for understanding not only the philosophical and intellectual dimensions of his Neo-Confucianism, but also the ethical, educational, and spiritual patterns of his life and character. As revealed in his Four-Seven thesis, his Neo-Confucianism emphasizes a way to cultivate sagehood, the ultimate truth of human nature, calling for a Neo-Confucian way of life that integrates intellectual insight, moral effort, contemplative discipline, and spiritual cultivation.

He returned to Tosan in very ill health, but continued his study and teaching during the last years left to him. He died in the last month of 1570, sitting up in bed, peaceful and alert to the very end.

T'oegye's Learning and Works

T'oegye himself states that in the formative years he had no teachers and/or intellectual friends.⁵⁶ For this reason, self-learning through intensive readings of attainable collections of Neo-Confucian works and contemplating upon them were the primary ways for him to be referred to the "synthesizer and complete integrator" or chipdaesongja of the Ch'eng-Chu school and "the greatest scholar"

T'oegye's Four-Seven debate with Kobong will be later explored later in detail.

⁵⁶ T'oegye, TGCS, 2: 789.

in the history of Korean Neo-Confucianism.⁵⁷ Especially, according to Lee Sang-eun, three classics, which are, Classic of the Mind-and-Heart (Simkyong), Great Compendium of Neo-Confucianism (Sungni daejun), and The Complete Works of Chu Hsi (Juja daejun) left deep impression upon him.⁵⁸

The Classics of the Mind-and-Heart is a crystallization of Ch'eng-Chu thought dealing with personal self-cultivation, often-called *simhak*, literally meaning the “learning of the mind-and heart.” It deals almost exclusively with the inward cultivation of the spiritual life, and emphasizes above all *kyong*, “seriousness,” “reverence,” or “reverential seriousness,” as the central practice of all self-cultivation.⁵⁹ The last five chapters of T'oegye's Ten Diagrams of Sage Learning are devoted to various aspects of the learning of the mind-and heart and he deliberately makes *kyong* the central theme of the whole work. T'oegye states, “In

⁵⁷ Ip-moon Chang, T'oegye chorhak ipmoon (Introduction to T'oegye's philosophy), trans. Yoon-hee Lee (Seoul: T'oegyehak yunguwon, 1990), 9.

⁵⁸ Sang-eun Lee, T'oegye's Life and Learning, 118.

⁵⁹ The basic literal meaning of *kyong* is “reverence.” It could either apply to inner disposition or describe external appearance, as in a reverent demeanor. However, modern scholars of Neo-Confucianism have differently translated it. For example, Wing-tsit Chan gives a number of translations of *kyong* which he adopts Bruce's translation of “seriousness,” whereas Michael C. Kalton translates it “mindfulness.” See Wing-tsit Chan, trans. A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 785; and Michael C. Kalton, trans., To Become a Sage, 212-14.

these ten diagrams, I made *kyong* the dominant spirit and guide.”⁶⁰ For T’oegye, *kyong* is the beginning and the end of the sage learning.

Another important influence in T’oegye’s learning was the Great Compendium of Neo-Confucianism, an encyclopedic compendium of the discussions of Sung and Yuan Neo-Confucianism topically arranged to cover the most fundamental works, concepts, and issues in the Ch’eng-Chu tradition. T’oegye later became thoroughly familiar with this work. References to it are scattered throughout his correspondence with his students and most of the quotes of authorities other than Chu Hsi and the Ch’eng’s brothers in the Ten Diagrams can be traced to its pages. But in his early years he possessed only the first and last of its seventy fascicles, which he obtained when he was nineteen years old. The first, containing the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate, along with Chu Hsi’s commentary and extensive additional comments, was of special importance, for it provided him with a fundamental grounding in Neo-Confucian metaphysics. He later told his students that it was this that first really opened his eyes and provided him his point of entry to the Way.⁶¹

⁶⁰ T’oegye, TGCS, 1: 203.

⁶¹ Ibid., 2: 789.

The third work, the Complete Works of Chu Hsi, was also of decisive importance to the formation of T'oegye's philosophy and life.⁶² T'oegye obtained its copy at the age of forty-three. The study of this work became his consuming interest. About one-third of 120 fascicles are made up of Chu Hsi's voluminous correspondence. This portion he read and reread so often that his disciples several times had to replace his worn-out copies with new ones. The letters are an invaluable source for understanding the history and development of Chu Hsi's ideas and thoughts, but for T'oegye this was not their main importance. Self-cultivation, not theory, was ever the center of his concern, and he highly appreciated the letters because they offered a personal encounter with a master spiritual director whose response and advice was appropriate to the many circumstances, personalities, and spiritual/intellectual levels of those he addressed. In the letters T'oegye sought out not so much the theoretical system as the mind and spirit of Chu Hsi.

T'oegye's involvement with Chu Hsi is reflected in his first work, a recession of the letters, the Chujaso choryo (The Essential of Chu Hsi's Correspondence). It is a selection of about one-third of the original corpus of Chu Hsi's letters emphasizing particularly his discussions of matters related to self-cultivation.⁶³

⁶² Sang-eun Lee, T'oegye' Life and Learning, 140-51.

⁶³ Ibid., 142.

T'oegye's second major work is the Kyemong chonui (Problems Relating to the *Ch'i-meng*). His early interest in the Book of Changes is reflected in this work. Over the years he pondered the ancient sources of the interpretation of the Book of Changes and tried to discover the meaning of Chu Hsi's interpretation and comments on obscure points of it. In 1557 he arranged the hundreds of pages of notes he had accumulated on this and finally produced the Kyemong chonui.⁶⁴

In 1559 he began to compile the massive records of everyone involved in the transmission of Chu Hsi's learning and thought. The result was the Songgye Won Myong ihak t'ongnok (Comprehensive Record of Southern Sung, Yuan, and Ming Neo-Confucianism). In ten fascicles he reviewed some 517 persons, recording the available data on their biographies and the character of their learning. It is an invaluable historical source, but T'oegye's motivation, as indicated in his introductory remarks was not merely to preserve the historical record, but rather to make the essence of the true Way apparent through the record of the twist and the turns, depths and shallows of its actual historical transmission down from Chu Hsi.⁶⁵

The best source to take a glimpse of T'oegye's personality and intellectuality as well is his extensive collection of letters, which fills thirty-six fascicles of his

⁶⁴ Ibid., 83-84.

⁶⁵ T'oegye, TGCS, 2: 250.

Complete Works (T'oegye Chonso). He himself collected those he considered especially important into a separate compilation, the Chasongnok (Record for Self-Reflection).⁶⁶

The last great work is the Ten Diagrams on Sage Learning (Sunghak sipdo). This brief work, as the profound and fundamental piece of T'oegye's thought, presents the essential framework and basic linkages of Neo-Confucian metaphysics, psychological analysis of human mind, educational theory and practice for sage-learning. T'oegye composed it at the age of 68 in 1586 and left it with the seventeen years old King Sunjo as he retired. The Ten Diagrams on Sage Learning was his substitute for teaching the king because of his illness. Even though it is addressed to the ruler, every man/woman will be benefited from it because it focuses on the questions of learning and self-cultivation needed to become a full and ideal human being.

The format of the Ten Diagrams is ten sections or chapters.⁶⁷ Each begins with a diagram and related text drawn from Chu Hsi or other leading scholars, and concludes with T'oegye's own comments on them. The brief format and the presenting of them on screen (*byungpoong*) are closely related to the purpose of

⁶⁶ Ibid., 2: 151-90.

⁶⁷ For a brief introduction and the characteristics of literal structure of The Ten Diagrams on Sage learning, see T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 24-28.

this work. It is intended for repeat reading and reflection. In moments of leisure, the eye could gaze at it and the mind engage with its contents, so that one might totally comprehend this material and practice it as a part of his/her life experiences.

The first five chapters present the essential framework, including the description of universe (metaphysics), society (ethics), and their import for human life (learning). The remaining five chapters deal with self-cultivation. They begin with the analysis of human inner life (psychology) and conclude with concrete educational and ascetical theory and practice. The chapters on learning are central in this work. T'oegye carefully makes the balanced unity between intellectual considerations and moral practice which are the interdependent and dialectically related to the single process of self-transformation called sage-learning. In the process of sage-learning, T'oegye explicitly makes *kyong* or “reverential seriousness” the central of the whole Ten Diagrams. For T'oegye, *kyong* is absolutely fundamental for both study and practice. Therefore, T'oegye fully devotes the final two chapters to the topic of *kyong*.

Chapter 3

T'oegye's Understanding of Humanity

The purpose of this chapter is to examine T'oegye's doctrine of human nature. T'oegye, as Chun-keun Yun points out, did not claim any originality for his thoughts and ideas about humanity. Rather, his task was to lead his contemporaries to the ancient wisdom.¹ For this reason, in order to understand T'oegye's doctrine of human nature, it is necessary for us to begin with exploring the Neo-Confucian views of human nature. After discussing the basic ideas of Neo-Confucian understanding of human nature, we will discuss the fundamental aspects of T'oegye's view of human nature.

Neo-Confucian Understanding of Humanity

Before examining the Neo-Confucian ideas of human nature, we need to explore the Neo-Confucian views of the cosmos and being because humanity for Neo-Confucians can not be understood apart from their understanding of the cosmos and being.

In particular, the Neo-Confucian developments of fundamental concepts, such as *taeguk/t'ai-chi* (the Great Ultimate), *i/li* (principle) and *ki/ch'i* (material force),

¹ Chun-keun Yun, T'oegye chorhak eul eoutuke bol kusinga? (How can we see T'oegye's philosophy?) (Seoul: Onuri, 1987), 52. T'oegye, in his "Address Presenting the Ten Diagrams," also states, "Although I myself made them, their words, their meaning, their categories and their arrangements are derived from the

and yin and yang, are intrinsically related to the Neo-Confucian understandings of cosmology and ontology.

Taeguk/T'ai chi (the Great Ultimate)

The fields of cosmology and ontology were not fully developed in Classical Confucianism. Of course, this does not mean that there was no cosmological or ontological awareness in Classical Confucianism. On the contrary, deep insights of cosmology and ontology can be found in The Book of Changes and The Doctrine of Mean. What should be pointed out here, however, is that an articulated and systematic explanation of how the universe came into being and the meaning of the universe were not clearly spelled out until the Neo-Confucian era, specifically in the Sung-Ming period of China.

We need to notice that in the Neo-Confucian tradition such fundamental concepts as “the Great Ultimate,” “principle,” “material force,” and “yin and yang” are all deeply interrelated and can not be understood in isolation. Each can only be defined in terms of its surrounding concepts, and together they form an organic picture of cosmic reality.

The Great Ultimate (*taeguk/t'ai-chi*) is the most fundamental concept in the Neo-Confucian world view, and the developments of both Neo-Confucian cosmology and ontology were dependent on it. Before we discuss the ideas of

wise men of earlier times and are not my own creation.” See T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 32.

Neo-Confucian thinkers about the Great Ultimate, we have to look at the original appearance of this word in “Appendix III” of The Book of Changes: “Therefore in the Change there is the Great Ultimate which produces the two primary forces [yin and yang].”² This implies that the Great Ultimate is the origin of the universe and the source of the movement of yin and yang, which are the two primal forces of the universe, creating the myriad things and beings.

Originally, yin means the shadow side of the mountain, whereas yang means the sunny side. Yin is described as the female characteristics: stillness, darkness, and passivity, whereas yang is described as the male characteristics: movement, light, and activity. Since the Great Ultimate is posited as the source of both yin and yang, the Neo-Confucian thinker Chou Tun-i (1017-73) advocated the Great Ultimate as the origin of the universe. The most important contribution that Chou Tun-i made to the theory of the Great Ultimate was his work An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate, which became the source of orthodox Neo-Confucian cosmology.³ The essential parts of Chou’s cosmology could be found in the following passages:

By the transformation of yang and its union with yin, the Five Agents [Elements] of Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth arise. When these five material forces [*ki/ch’i*] are distributed in

² Quoted from Yu-lan Fung, Short History of Chinese Philosophy, 270.

³ Ibid., 269-70.

harmonious order, the four seasons run their course. The Five Agents constitute one system of yin and yang, and yin and yang constitute one Great Ultimate. The Great Ultimate is fundamentally the Non-Ultimate [*mukuk/wu-chi*].⁴

This passage implies that the Great Ultimate, for Chou Tun-I, was the ultimate, and, in his view, there was nothing beyond or prior to the Great Ultimate. That is why Chou identified the Great Ultimate with the Non-Ultimate. Yet although Chou developed a comprehensive and systematic account of the Neo-Confucian cosmology based on the concept of the Great Ultimate, he did not make any explicit statement defining the exact nature of the Great Ultimate itself. However, Chou was clear on the primary role of the Great Ultimate in his view of the origin of the cosmos: the Great Ultimate produced yin and yang, and these in turn produced the Five Agents, through which myriad things are created.

Furthermore, his notions, as to how human being and myriad things came into existence, suggest the ontological and anthropological implications answering the questions in regard to the original nature of humanity and the methods of self-cultivation to achieve the fulfillment of the sagehood. The following passage illustrates this point:

It is a man [human being] alone, however, who receives these in their highest excellence and hence is the most intelligent [of all beings]. . . . The five principles of one's nature [the five constant virtues corresponding to the Five Agents or Elements] react [to

⁴ Ibid., 270.

external phenomena], so that the distinction between good and evil emerges and the myriad phenomena of conduct appear. The sage regulates him/herself by means of the mean, correctness, human-heartedness, and righteousness, and takes quiescence as the essential.⁵

I/Li (Principle) and Ki/Ch'i (Material Force)

The Great Ultimate is also related to the pair of concepts, *i/li* (principle) and *ki/ch'i* (material force). Generally, in the Neo-Confucian tradition, *i/li* has been identified with metaphysical principle of reality, while *ki/ch'i* with the material force of reality.⁶ However, it would be a mistake to think of *i/li* and *ki/ch'i* in terms of the dualism of the Western philosophical tradition, as seen in such conceptual dualities as “form” and “matter” or “mind” and “body.” As we will see shortly, while seemingly dualistic in the tradition of Neo-Confucianism, *i/li* and *ki/ch'i* were not dualistically structured. Principle and material force are never separate. Principle needs material force in order to have something to adhere to, and material force needs principle as its own law of being. The relationship between *i/li* and *ki/ch'i* will be explored in the following discussions.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ For a brief explanation of the English translation of *i/li* and *ki/ch'i*, see Fung, Short History of Chinese Philosophy, 285; and Michael C. Kalton, trans., To Become a Sage, 214-16.

The Ch'eng brothers⁷ advocated that *i/li* was the “principle of nature,” self-evident, and self-sufficient, extending everywhere and governing all things, neither augmented nor diminished, possessed by all people and all things.⁸ For the Ch'eng brothers, while multiple, *i/li* was essentially a unity, for all specific principles are but “principle.” *I/li* was thus universal truth, universal order, and universal law, envisioned as a dynamic process of creation and production. For the Ch'eng brothers, this fundamental principle was the source of all other principles of order, both natural and an ethical. Quoting Heidegger's terminology, Young-chan Ro aptly identifies *i/li* with “an ‘ontological principle’—the universal principle of all beings—as well as an ‘ontic principle’—a specific principle of each and every being.”⁹ Although the Ch'eng brothers never clearly identified *i/li* with the Great Ultimate in a cosmological sense, they understood *i/li* as the ultimate principle in both an ontological and an anthropological sense. In regard to this aspect, Wing-

⁷ Later, Neo-Confucianism came to be divided into two main schools, which were initiated by two brothers, known the Ch'eng brothers. Ch'eng I (1033-1108), the younger brother, initiated a school which was completed by Chu Hsi (1130-1200) and was known as the Ch'eng-Chu school. Ch'eng Hao (1032-1085), the elder brother, initiated another school which was continued by Lu Chiu-yuan (1139-1193) and completed by Wang Shou-jen (1473-1525), and was known as the Lu-Wang school.

⁸ Fung, 284-87.

⁹ Young-chan Ro, The Korean Neo-Confucianism of Yi Yulgok (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 22. For the basic meaning of *i/li*, see Fung, 281-93.

tsit Chan writes, the Ch'engs and their followers "turned Neo-Confucianism from speculation on cosmology to concentrate on the problems of principle and human nature, thereby making Neo-Confucianism truly a School of Nature [including human nature] and principle" or *Sungnihak*.¹⁰

What then was the relationship between *i/li* and *ki/ch'i* for the Ch'engs? The brothers took different approaches. Ch'eng I's brother Ch'eng Hao is often seen as a monist because of his tendency not to distinguish between matter and spirit, while Ch'eng I himself is accused of dualism because he held material force to exist only after the inception of physical form, while principle was prior to and independent of physical form.¹¹ However, the apparent dualism of this formula disappears if we conduct a closer examination of it.

Actually, for Ch'eng I, *i/li* functions in much the same way as the concept of the Great Ultimate in the Book of Changes. What Ch'eng I did was to reinterpret the Great Ultimate for use in his ontology, incorporating many of its fundamental aspects into his idea of *i/li* and doing so in the same non-dualistic spirit as that of The Book of Changes. For Ch'eng I, *i/li* was the principle of the alternation of yin and yang which is fundamentally non-dualistic and always remains concealed.

¹⁰ Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 544.

¹¹ Fung, 281-93.

That is why, for him, *i/li* belongs to “what is above shape,” while *ki/ch’i*, the manifestation of yin and yang, belongs to “what is within shapes.”¹²

Thus, the Ch’eng brothers’ implicit notion of the Great Ultimate to ontology through their notions of principle and material force opened up a new possibility of synthesis, for the Great Ultimate in the universe and the Great Ultimate in being could be seen as the same Great Ultimate, and in both cosmology and ontology this Great Ultimate could be formulated in a non-dualistic manner.

In the Ch’eng brothers’ system, the Great Ultimate became a cosmo-ontological reality. A significant progress in understanding and interpreting the Great Ultimate in a cosmo-ontologic way was made by Chu Hsi. Chu Hsi, as Wing-tsit Chan points out, synthesized Neo-Confucian cosmology and ontology by explaining Chou Tun-i’s cosmology through and with the Ch’eng brothers’ ontological notions of principle and material force.¹³

Now let us pay our attention to the greatest synthesizer of Neo-Confucianism, Master Chu Hsi, to learn more about the above mentioned fundamental concepts.

¹² The expressions, “what is above shape” and “what is within shapes” are originally derived from the Book of Changes. In the Neo-Confucian tradition, *ki/ch’i* or material force and the concrete objects made by it pertain to “what is within shapes,” i.e., to what is physical. *I/Li* or principle, on the other hand, pertains to “what is above shape,” i.e., to what is metaphysical. For more details in this subject, see Fung, 285-86.

¹³ Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 588-89.

For Chu Hsi, the Great Ultimate is basically the principle of the alternation of yin and yang, and this principle is invisible or “above shapes,” while yin and yang are material force—corporeal or “within shapes.” The essential parts of Chu Hsi’s doctrine of the Great Ultimate in relation to principle can be found in the following passages:

Everything has an ultimate, which is the ultimate of principle. That which unites and embraces the principle of heaven, earth, and all things is the Great Ultimate.¹⁴

This implies that, for the universe as a whole, there must be an ultimate standard, which is supreme and all embracing. It embraces the multitude of *i/li* for all things and is the highest summation of all of them. Therefore, it is called the Great Ultimate. Chu Hsi also says:

The Great Ultimate is simply what is highest of all, beyond which nothing can be. It is the most high, most mystical, and most abstruse, surpassing everything.¹⁵

This statement signifies that the Great Ultimate, for Chu Hsi, is not only the summation of the principle of the universe as a whole: but it is also immanent in each and every individual being and thing. In other words, every particular thing has inherent in it the principle of its particular category of things, but at the same time the Great Ultimate in its entirety is inherent in it too. Thus, in Chu Hsi’s

¹⁴ Fung, 297.

¹⁵ Ibid.

system, there is the unity of transcendence and immanence of the Great Ultimate.

The following passage of Chu Hsi illustrates this point further:

With regard to heaven and earth in general, the Great Ultimate is in heaven and earth. And with regard to the myriad things in particular, the Great Ultimate is in every one of them too.¹⁶

Assimilating the concepts of the Great Ultimate advocated by Chou Tun-i and combining it with the concept of principle of the Ch'eng brother, Chu Hsi held: "The Great Ultimate is nothing other than principle."¹⁷ Chu Hsi considered Chou Tun-i's doctrine of the Great Ultimate as based on principle instead of material force. For Chu Hsi, all actual and potential principles are contained in the Great Ultimate, which is complete in all things as a whole and in each thing individually.

¹⁶ Ibid., 298.

¹⁷ Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 638. *i/li* is the most important single term in Neo-Confucian discourse. Its original meaning has to do with order or putting things in order; hence it comes to signify the patterning or structure that underlines and brings about order. In its patterning or structuring aspect *i/li* is responsible for making things be as they are and act as they do. In this respect, Neo-Confucians identified *i/li* with the inherent nature of each and every thing. While *i/li* is the inherent nature and norm of particular things and beings, from another perspective, it may be regarded as a single underlying pattern that embrace all beings and things as a harmonious whole and serves as the norm for their appropriate interaction. A variety of translations ("principle," "law," "pattern," "norm," "truth," etc.) would serve to bring out the nuance of *i/li* appropriate to different contexts; however, "principle" has been most widely accepted. No other term comes as close to combining the formative and normative aspects of *i/li*, for there are principles of structure and function as well as principles of moral conduct.

It is the principle of things to be actualized, and actualization requires principle as its substance and material force as its actuality.

Principle is necessary to explain the reality and universality of things. It is incorporeal, one, eternal and unchanging, uniform, constituting the essence of things, always good, but it does not contain a dichotomy of good and evil, does not create things. Material force is necessary to explain physical form, individuality, and the transformation of things. It is physical, many, transitory and changeable, involving both good and evil (depending on whether its endowment in things is balanced or partial), and is the agent of creation. Chu Hsi liked to quote Ch'eng I's statement that "Nature is the same as principle."¹⁸ The following passage of Chu Hsi explains the meaning of Ch'eng I's saying further:

A thing is a concrete instance of its principle. Unless there be such and such a *i/li*, there cannot be such and such a thing. As soon as a thing exists, the *i/li* is inherent in it. The nature of a thing is the *i/li* of the thing. It is this *i/li* that makes them such that we can say that they are.¹⁹

What is the relationship between *i/li* and *ki/ch'i* in Chu Hsi's system?

For Chu Hsi, *ki/ch'i* is the concrete physical world, structured according to the pattern of *i/li*. While *i/li* is the blueprint, *ki/ch'i* is the means whereby things are produced. The realization of the physical world is thus

¹⁸ Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 614.

¹⁹ Fung, 296.

dependent on the interaction of *i/li* and *ki/ch'i*—the manifestation of *i/li* by *ki/ch'i*, the shaping of *ki/ch'i* by *i/li*. In this way, Chu Hsi developed Ch'eng I's ontology and then tried to relate these two notions of *i/li* and *ki/ch'i* in a distinct non-dualistic way.

Thus, for Chu Hsi, principle and material force are certainly different things. These two things, however, are merged as one and cannot be separated from each other. While seemingly dualistic, principle and material force are never separate. Principle needs material force to have something to adhere to, and material force needs principle as its own law of being. Accordingly, it can be said that principle and material force have a dialectical relationship.

What about the problem of priority? Chu Hsi believed that principle had to exist prior to its own manifestation in physical reality through material force. The following passage illustrates this point:

Before the instance of it exists there was the *i/li*. For example, before there exists any sovereign and subject, there was the *i/li* of the relationship between sovereign ad subject.²⁰

But was unmanifested principle also prior to unshaped material force? To this question, Chu Hsi's answer was as follows:

Principle is never separable from material force. Nevertheless, principle pertains to 'what is above shapes' whereas material force pertains to 'what is within shapes.' Hence if we speak of 'what is

²⁰ Ibid., 299.

above shapes' and 'what is within shapes,' how can there not be priority and posteriority?²¹

Elsewhere he also says: "In reality, principle is prior. We cannot say, however, that there is principle today and material force tomorrow. Yet there must be a priority one to the other."²² These statements suggest that the priority of principle to material force must not be understood as a temporal priority, but as a logical one. This is, what we called, Chu Hsi's theory of "principle prior to material force."

What is, then, the relationship between the Great Ultimate which encompasses all the particulars and the Great Ultimate which is an each particular and individual? Are there two different Great Ultimates? Chu Hsi answers as follows:

There is but one Great Ultimate, which is received by individuals of all things. This one Great Ultimate is received by each individual in its entirety and undivided.²³

This statement suggests the fundamental doctrine that the "principle is one but its manifestations are many [and diverse]."²⁴

In conclusion, for Chu Hsi, the Great Ultimate embraces the multitude of

²¹ Ibid., 300.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

principle in all things, and that the Great Ultimate is not only the principle of all things, but the principle of each and every thing. In other words, the Great Ultimate is not only the principle of the universe but also the principle that is inherent in a particular individuality. In relation to Chu Hsi's moral and psychological philosophy, *i/li* then can be identified with as *song/hsing* or "human nature," which is always thought to be full of goodness, truth, and moral principles.

Doctrines of Human Nature and Mind

With the basic understandings of Neo-Confucian doctrines of cosmology and ontology in mind, let us examine the Neo-Confucian ideas of human nature and mind in order to get close to T'oegye's understanding of humanity. One of the first discussions of human nature is generally taken from Mencius. Mencius, in the Book of Mencius, said that "Human being is naturally good just as water naturally flows downward."²⁵ Mencius also stated that the feeling of commiseration, the feeling of shame and dislike, the feeling of deference and compliance, and the feeling of right and wrong are inherent in human beings, and that these qualities make what human being is and are the beginnings of humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, which are also contained in human beings,

²⁵ Ibid., 52.

known as *sadan* or the Four Beginnings.²⁶ Thus, according to Mencius, we are human beings because we naturally and necessarily possess those feelings, and we would be able to do good if we were left to our own natural inclinations, thus making us morally good as well. The Neo-Confucians in general accept Mencius' such view of the goodness of original human nature as self-evidently true.

In its very opening paragraph of The Doctrine of the Mean, Chu Hsi also declared that "What heaven imparts to human beings is called human nature. To follow our nature is called the Way. Cultivating the Way is called education."²⁷ This remark implies that as received by human being from the principle of heaven, which is perfectly good, it is called human nature; hence, human beings are originally good. But the question of whether he/she is morally good is left to the task of education. Mencius further states:

He who exerts his mind the utmost knows his nature. He who knows his nature knows heaven. To preserve one's mind and to nourish one's nature is the Way to serve Heaven.²⁸

These statements all together imply that Neo-Confucianism views the original state of human nature to be pure and divine because it is the same as the principle of Heaven, which is perfectly good. The central concern, then, is to demonstrate, in

²⁶ Ibid., 65.

²⁷ Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 98.

²⁸ Ibid., 78.

practical living, how this truth ought to be realized. In other words, classical Confucian notions imply that human beings are originally good by nature, but the question of whether he/she is morally good is left to his/her moral self-cultivation.

The concept of human nature was periodically revised by Sung Neo-Confucians, particularly those of the Ch'eng-Chu school, integrating the human nature into a universal cosmological scheme. As we have seen, in Neo-Confucian cosmology, principle is immanent in all beings and things, but it could be manifested through material force. Nature is seen as principle and thus is devoid of any intrinsic dynamism. It requires material force for its expression. "What exists before physical form is the one principle harmonious and undifferentiated, and is invariably good. What exists after physical form, however, is confused and mixed, and good and evil are thereby undifferentiated."²⁹ This statement suggests that what makes a thing different from other things is its material force, and that the moral quality of an entity is determined by the quality of its material force—whether it is clear or turbid.

This view advocated by Ch'eng I was further elaborated by Chu Hsi. Chu Hsi introduced the concept of physical nature as opposed to original nature to explain the moral phenomenon. Chu Hsi said, "As there is Heaven-endowed nature, there

²⁹ Ibid., 597.

is also physical nature.”³⁰ This passage implies that human being has the two sides of natures: on the one hand, an original nature, which is endowed by the principle of heaven, is essentially good; on the other hand, a physical nature, which may existentially be good or bad, depending on the quality of the material force with which it is endowed. Only when he/she returns to accord with his/her original nature, does he/she act in accord with moral principle.³¹

How, then, can we preserve the original human nature, endowed by the principle of heaven and control the physical nature, endowed by material force, to act in accord with moral principle? In Neo-Confucian views, what determines the morality of human action is mind, since human mind “embraces all principle and all principles are complete in this single entity. If one is not able to preserve the mind, one will be unable to investigate principle to the utmost.”³² Thus, mind, in Chu Hsi’s view, is consciousness.³³ Through one’s mind one is cognizant of one’s own self as well as of the external world. Moreover, this mind contains an innate knowledge of moral law and has the cognitive capacity to discern it. In its most

³⁰ Ibid., 616.

³¹ Ibid., 612-20.

³² Ibid., 606.

³³ For the details of Chu Hsi’s doctrine of human mind, see Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 602-04.

developed state of full consciousness, mind can comprehend everything in the universe with clarity.

The problem is that this capacity of mind can be prevented from functioning properly and consciousness might operate independent of moral law when mind becomes clouded by selfish desire. In this regard, Chu Hsi says:

What is meant by the precariousness of the human mind is the budding of human selfish desires, and what is meant by the subtlety of the moral mind is the all-embracing death of the principle of Heaven [nature].³⁴

Thus, he used the concepts of “the human mind” and “the moral mind” in explaining this phenomenon. The human mind and the moral mind, however, were not ontologically separate entities; rather, they were descriptive terms referring to different states of mind. The former referred to the state in which mind contained the seeds of selfish desire and was prone to error, while the latter referred to mind rectified and consciously discerning moral law. Chu Hsi never doubted human being’s potential to achieve a moral mind. The question, for Chu Hsi, was not whether human being could do this but rather how he/she should do it.

In short, Neo-Confucians generally view the original state of human nature to be pure and divine because it is the same as the nature of Heaven. However, the

³⁴ Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 603.

existential human nature or physical nature, combined with material force, may be good or evil, depending on the quality of it. Only when one returns to his/her original nature, is one able to act in accord with moral law inherent in mind. The mind determines human action since “it combines and governs human nature and feelings” (*simtongsungjung*).³⁵ Therefore, the rectification of mind through self-cultivation is the way to achieve the fulfillment of ideal humanity.

T'oegye's Understanding of Human Nature

We have examined the fundamental Neo-Confucian ideas of human nature which are intrinsically related to the Neo-Confucian views of cosmos and being in order to understand T'oegye's doctrine of human nature. For the understanding of Neo-Confucian views of cosmos and being, we have also explored the basic meanings of the essential concepts, such as the Great Ultimate, principle and material force, and their implications for understanding of the human nature.

With such an introduction to the Neo-Confucian understanding of humanity, we will examine the essential parts of T'oegye's philosophical anthropology. The distinguishable characteristics of T'oegye's understanding of human nature can be categorized into the following three-fold systems: (1) human being as an empirical

³⁵ For a detailed discussion of the nature and function of the human mind, see the Diagram on the Saying “The Mind Combines and Governs the Nature and the Feelings” in T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 119-41.

self fallen from the essence into the existence; (2) human being as a relational self; and (3) sage as a goal of humanity.

Human Being as an Empirical Self

Like other Neo-Confucians, T'oegye's fundamental idea of human nature is centered on the moral cultivation of oneself as a full and proper human being; that is to say, the restoring of the original human nature. It is assumed that the original human nature is pure and good since it is the same as the nature of Heaven; however, human being as a finite being cannot be freed from the existential problematic conditions endowed by material force. Accordingly, a person in T'oegye's philosophical anthropology can be defined as an empirical self who is experiencing the transition from the original human nature into the physical human nature and striving to reverse this transition.

Along with other Neo-Confucians, T'oegye's idea of human nature also cannot be discussed apart from his metaphysical thought of cosmos. It is, therefore, reasonable for us to begin with the first diagram of his Songhak sipto, in which T'oegye elaborates his basic metaphysical understanding of universe, the nature of human being and its place in the universe, and the state of sagehood.³⁶ In T'oegye's view of the origin of cosmos described in the first diagram of Songhak sipto, the Great Ultimate produced yin and yang, and these in turn produced the

³⁶ Ibid., 37-42.

Five Agents, thorough which myriad things are created.³⁷ On the surface level, the Diagram of the Great Ultimate seems to tell us the overall framework of T'oegye's metaphysical theory of cosmos. Examining deeply the remained part of it, it must be noticed that the fundamental moral cultivation rather than philosophical theory is his primary concern for the learning of sagehood in Songhak sipto.³⁸

T'oegye's Cosmology. Along with the tradition of Ch'eng-Chu school, T'oegye identifies the Great Ultimate with *i/li* or principle. For T'oegye, "the Great Ultimate is nothing other than principle."³⁹ Its fundamental characteristic is that, as distinguished from concrete things and phenomenon existing within physical form, *i/li* is the metaphysical principle that must exist without physical form. The notion that "fundamentally there is only one Great Ultimate, yet each of the myriad things is endowed with it and each in itself possesses the Great Ultimate in its entirety"⁴⁰ implies the ontological omnipresence of principle. Although the particularization of principle takes myriad variations, principle in itself is always good, unchanging, and universal. Ontologically speaking, principle

³⁷ Ibid., 37. In his Songhak sipto, T'oegye used Chou Tun-i's Diagram of the Great Ultimate and Chu Hsi's interpretation of it, and he himself commented on it.

³⁸ T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 38-42.

³⁹ Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 638.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

is unitary and transcendent; phenomenally speaking, however, it is immanent and its particularization is many and different in concrete phenomenon. In relation to the moral and psychological philosophy of T'oegye, like that of Chu Hsi, principle is identified also as human nature and, thus, thought to be full of goodness and moral principles.⁴¹

As we have seen, for Chu Hsi, principle and material force are conceptually distinct, but they are inseparable in concrete things. For Chu Hsi, principle and material force must come together to form a concrete thing; therefore, they are inseparable from each other. Logically speaking, however, they are distinct. But they are never separated from each other. From an ontological standpoint of existence, principle has neither form nor physical body, but material force has form.

In T'oegye's thinking, like Chu Hsi, principle is the law of being that underlies all concrete phenomena. Principle is the ultimate reality, rather than the actual and phenomenal activity. Material force is the actual, material agent of creation and transformation. In other words, principle brings into existence Heaven, Earth, and

⁴¹ Generally, Neo-Confucians believe that when an individual thing comes into existence, a certain *i/li* (principle) is inherent in it, which makes it what it is and constitutes its nature. A person, like other things, is a concrete particular being in the concrete world. Hence, what we call human nature is simply the *i/li* of humanity that is inherent in the individual. T'oegye's understanding of *i/li* as human nature is expounded in detail in his Four Beginnings-Seven debate with Kobong.

the myriad things. It is the principle behind the manifestation of material force in all cosmic phenomena.

T'oegye's Understanding of *I/Li* and *Ki/Ch'i*. How, then, did T'oegye view Chu Hsi's philosophy of principle? In his famous Four Beginnings-Seven Feelings debate (*sadan chichong ron*) with Kobong (1527-72),⁴² T'oegye reexamined the whole idea of principle and material force in the context of his moral and psychological philosophy of human nature and mind and of its implications for self-cultivation.

As I have already indicated, the Confucian term Four Beginnings (*sadan*) originally comes from the Book of Mencius. In this book, Mencius specifically refers to the human mind-and-heart of commiseration, that of shame and dislike, that of courtesy and modesty, and that of moral discernment of right and wrong as the Four Beginnings of such key Confucian virtues as benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom. Mencius believes that the Four Beginnings of virtue are

⁴² Ki's given name was Taesung and his honorific name was Kobong. He was one of the best minds and most broadly and deeply learned of his generation. He was only thirty-two years old, twenty-seven years junior to T'oegye, when the debate between them began. The learning and thoroughness of his argumentation against T'oegye were a great contribution to what was attained in the course of debate. That T'oegye allowed himself to be pressed so hard by one so much his junior reflects a rare intellectual humility and openness on his part, especially in a social context which normally demanded great deference to one's elder. This eight-year-long-debate has been highly recognized as the single most important intellectual controversy throughout Korean Neo-Confucian history.

originally and naturally rooted in the human mind-and-heart. The Four Beginnings are, then, natural seeds of moral cultivation. This conviction of the Four Beginnings as our innate virtuous qualities is the basis of Mencius' doctrine of the original goodness of human nature (*song/hsing*). Evil is not inborn, but comes from one's neglect to express the innate natural goodness of human nature in the human mind-and-heart known as the Four Beginnings.

The locus for the Confucian term Seven Feelings (*chilchong*) is the Book of Rites.⁴³ According to this classic, pleasure, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hatred, and desire are basic human feelings not acquired through learning from the outside. As this list is too long, the Doctrine of Mean draws special attention to the first three and adds joy representing the Seven Feelings:

Before [the feelings of] pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy are aroused, it is called equilibrium. When these are aroused and all of them attain their due degree and measure, it is called harmony.
Equilibrium is the great foundation of the world; harmony is the universal path.⁴⁴

According to these two books, the Seven Feelings refer to physiological and psychological states that are understood as basic human feelings and emotions in a natural, common sense. The Seven Feelings are not learned from the outside. However, they are still the aroused states of the mind in response to the external

⁴³ Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 520.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 98.

things. As the Doctrine of Mean indicates, the way of mind-cultivation demands a measure of control over them because their problem is excessiveness and disharmony. On the one hand, the purpose of self-cultivation is to retain the state of equilibrium before the Seven Feelings are aroused; on the other hand, it is to attain the state of harmony after they are aroused. This topic and its correlation with the Four Beginnings became one of the major issues in T'oegye's Four-Seven debate with Kobong.

With such a basic understanding of the Four Beginnings and the Seven Feelings, we need to ask some crucial questions regarding the distinguishable characteristics of the Four Beginnings and the Seven Feelings, and their relationship with human nature and mind.

Commenting on Mencian doctrine of the Four Beginnings, Chu Hsi distinguished human nature from feelings: "Commiseration, shame and dislike, courtesy and modesty, and moral discernment of right and wrong are feelings. Benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are human nature."⁴⁵ This statement corresponds to Ch'eng I's interpretation: "Love is a feeling, whereas benevolence is human nature."⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Quoted in Chung, 43.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Throughout his writings, however, Chu Hsi hardly discussed the relationship between the Four Beginnings and the Seven Feelings. He merely made a vague statement in terms of their origin; “The Four Beginnings are manifestation of *i/li*; the Seven Feelings are manifestation of *ki/ch’i*.⁴⁷ In his understanding of principle and material force, it is reasonable for Chu Hsi to assert that the Four Beginnings are manifested from principle, and the Seven Feelings from material force. It can also be explained in the following manner: because the Four Beginnings, as advocated by Mencius, are innate, moral expressions of the original goodness of human nature, they must be aroused by principle. By contrast, the Seven Feelings must be aroused by material force because they, as mentioned in the Doctrine of Mean, are physiological and psychological emotions that are capable of becoming good and evil, depending on their harmony.

The Four-Seven Debate. In the Four-Seven debate, the fundamental questions raised by T’oegye and his successors are as follows: If both the Four Beginnings and the Seven Feelings are basic human feelings, why make any distinction between them, using two different names? Commenting on T’oegye’s Four-Seven debate with Kobong, Michael C. Kalton correctly points out that whether the Four and the Seven are “only different names for the same reality looked at from different perspective, or rather truly point some differentiation in the condition

⁴⁷ This is a direct quote from Chu Hsi’s saying in T’oegye, TGCS, 1: 407.

whence they arise" was a central issue.⁴⁸ What about any meaningful connections between them? As Tu Wei-ming points out, "Surely there is a meaningful connection between the two realms. The whole intellectual enterprise of the Four-Seven debate, after all, was to define clearly what the connection is."⁴⁹

Another fascinating question was whether the meaning and implication of the Four Beginnings are superior to those of the Seven Feelings from a conceptual and moral standpoint. For Korean Neo-Confucian thinkers, these questions were significant for addressing not only the Four-Seven relationship from a philosophical standpoint, but also its implications for self-cultivation in an ethico-spiritual context. Now let us briefly discuss the Four-Seven debate between T'oegye and Kobong.

The statement that instigated the debate was Chong Chi-un's statement: "The Four Beginnings are manifest from principle; the Seven Feelings are manifest from material force."⁵⁰ In fact, Chong was the first Korean Neo-Confucian who

⁴⁸ T'oegye, To Become Sage, 136.

⁴⁹ Wei-ming Tu, "Yi T'oegye's Perception of Human Nature: A Preliminary Inquiry into the Four-Seven Debate in Korean Neo-Confucianism," in Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea, eds. de Bary and Haboush, 264.

⁵⁰ T'oegye first used this formula in 1553, and it originally appeared in the Diagram of the Heavenly Mandate (Chonmyung to), a work of his contemporary, Chi-un Chong (1509-1561). For the original and emended diagram, and T'oegye's long preface, see TGCS, 2: 321-47.

mentioned the distinction between the Four and the Seven. T'oegye revised Chong's saying into a slightly different version that is the same as Chu Hsi's saying: "The Four Beginnings are manifestation of principle and the Seven Feelings are manifestation of material force."⁵¹ In addition, T'oegye revised Chong's other statement:

The issuance of the Four involves purely principle and, therefore, does not have what is not good; the issuance of the Seven includes material force also and, accordingly, has both good and evil.⁵²

T'oegye asked Kobong's feedback on his revised versions of Chong's original Four-Seven statements.

In his response to T'oegye's request, Kobong wrote a thorough and convincing three-page critique,⁵³ in which he argued that there was the dualistic tendency implicit in T'oegye's thinking. First, Kobong argued that all feelings essentially and existentially involve principle and material force, and good and evil. In this respect, the Four Beginnings have no different status from the Seven Feelings.

The Four Beginnings are an expression of the Seven Feelings when they have not been distorted by material force and hence have attained their due measure and degree. Second, Kobong claimed that if we follow the theory that the Four

⁵¹ T'oegye, TGCS, 1:407.

⁵² Ibid., 402.

⁵³ Ibid., 405-07.

Beginnings are issued from principle and the Seven Feelings are issued from material force, we fall into a dualistic approach, dividing principle and material force and making them into two different things. Third, Kobong maintained that if we do fully divide principle and material force, then the Seven Feelings would have no connection to principle and the Four Beginnings none to material force.⁵⁴

For Kobong, there are no the Four Beginnings independent of the Seven Feelings; rather, the Four Beginnings are included in the Seven Feelings. In fact, for Kobong, the Seven Feelings and the Four Beginnings are one and the same reality. Implicit in Kobong's argument is that the Four Beginnings, like the Seven Feelings, are basic human feelings and thus the incipient manifestations of the mind after arousal.

T'oegye responded with an eight-page letter, more fully elaborated defense of his position.⁵⁵ T'oegye states:

Since I feared that Chong's distinction [of the Four and the Seven] is too strict, I have modified it by adding such phrases as 'purely good,'

⁵⁴ Ibid., 407-08. Kobong's position on this issue was clearly stated in his letter to T'oegye, which is included in TGCS. For the essential part of Kobong's Four Beginnings-Seven Feelings thesis, see Sung Tae-yong, "Kobong Ki Dae-seung ui sadan chilchongron (Kobong's Four Beginnings-Seven Feelings thesis)," in Sadan chilchongron (Four Beginnings-Seven Feelings debates) (Seoul: Seo kwang sa, 1992), ed. Yun Sa-soon, 69-90.

⁵⁵ This is called T'oegye's "First Letter to Kobong on the Four Beginnings and the Seven Feeling." See T'oegye, TGCS, 1: 405-07.

'involves material force,' and so on. . . . Generally speaking, the Four are feelings, and the Seven are also feelings. They are all feelings.⁵⁶

Generally speaking, principle and material force need, and depend on, each other: one being "substance" (*che/t'i*) and the other "function" (*yong/yung*). Certainly, there is no principle without material force, and no material force without principle. However, what is spoken of is not the same; there is a distinction between them.⁵⁷

In these passages, T'oegye generally agrees with Kobong's view that the Four and the Seven are all basic human feelings. He also accepts Kobong's view on the inseparability between principle and material force in the process of cosmic transformation. He still maintains, nevertheless, that the Four and the Seven can be, and should be, understood separately in terms of principle and material force. To articulate this point, he addresses the interpretation of the Mencian idea of human nature as follows:

Being reckless, I have considered that the distinction between the Four and the Seven is similar to that between the original human nature and the physical human nature. Why can we not analyze feelings in terms of principle and material force, if human nature is already spoken of in terms of principle and material force?⁵⁸

This passage can be summarized as follows. First, although principle and material force are inseparable, it is still possible to speak primarily in terms of one

⁵⁶ T'oegye, TGCS, 1: 405.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 406.

(principle) or the other (material force). Second, the distinction between the Four Beginnings and the Seven Feelings is merely the same as the distinction drawn in nature between the original nature and the physical nature, as these are identified primarily with principle and material respectively. Third, if we make this distinction between principle and material force in nature, we can make this distinction within feelings as well.

Thus, T'oegye points out the importance of analyzing the divergence as well as the convergence of the Four and the Seven. It is true that they, in terms of their consequential developments, cannot but involve both principle and material force. Yet, their origins are significantly different. The Four are initiated by innate moral qualities of the mind such as benevolence or humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, whereas the Seven are stimulated by complex processes involving both internal and external conditions.

In his Sim tong songchong tosol (Diagram of the Saying “the Mind Combines and Governs Human Nature and Feelings”),⁵⁹ T'oegye argues that the original

⁵⁹ For the original diagram in Chinese, see T'oegye, TGCS, 1: 204-06. For a complete English translation, see T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 119-41. T'oegye borrowed the first diagram from a Chinese source that contains the major ideas of Ch'eng-Chu theory that the mind combines and governs human nature and feelings and that pays special attention to the unity and duality of the mind in terms of “substance” (*che*) and “function” (*yong*). The second and the third diagrams were complied by T'oegye himself. They present not only a detailed philosophy of basic ideas presented in the first diagram, but also a summary of T'oegye's final position on the Four-Seven debate. According to T'oegye, the second diagram

human nature is basically the unmanifest and perfectly good state before the feelings are aroused, whereas the physical human nature is the manifest state involving good and evil after the feelings are aroused. For him, then, the Four should be represented by the original human nature, and the Seven by the physical human nature.

Now we need to ask, What motivated T'oegye to maintain it in such a way? More specifically, why did he prefer to set the Four over the Seven in terms of an *i-ki* dualism? This is, as Chung Sun-mok points out,⁶⁰ a moral issue with profound implications for the practice of self-cultivation. The whole dilemma for T'oegye was to formulate a convincing interpretation of the Four-Seven contrast that must be addressed in both philosophical and moral contexts. Throughout the whole debate, he criticizes Kobong for maintaining what he considers as an unconvincing view that the Four and the Seven cannot be analyzed separately in terms of principle and material force simply because principle and material force are inseparable in concrete phenomena including feelings.

focuses on the original human nature from the standpoint of principle, whereas the third diagram is a general summary of his Four-Seven thesis on the physical human nature from the standpoint of principle and material force combined. For this reason, the Sim tong songchong tosol is one of the primary sources as we discuss T'oegye's theory of human nature.

⁶⁰ Sun-mok Chong, T'oegye eui kyouk chorhak (T'oegye's educational philosophy) (Seoul: Chisik sanupsa, 1986), 123-29.

T'oegye's basic mission was to emphasize the Four in light of the Mencian doctrine of the goodness of human nature insofar as the Four should be considered as the genuine roots of moral self-cultivation. He meant that the Four has their own status of self-manifestation and self-regulation outside the Seven, whereas the Seven should be understood as basic physical and mental feelings and desires. It was, therefore, crucial to distinguish the Four from the Seven in both theoretical and practical contexts. For this reason, T'oegye politely instructed Kobong that if one did not distinguish clearly principle from material force, it might lead one to an "unfortunate consequence" of misidentifying the moral qualities endowed by the Heaven's principle (*chonli/t'ien-li*) with the selfish "human desire" (*inyok/jen-yu*) aroused by external stimuli.⁶¹ T'oegye's primary concern was the danger of failing to recognize the critical distinction between the Four and the Seven which makes confuse human desires with the Heavenly principle.

The debates, through exchanging letters, with Kobong did not make much change in T'oegye's original position that the Four and the Seven are different in terms of their origins, meaning, and qualities, and that the category of principle and material force can be meaningfully applied. Nevertheless, in response to Kobong's challenge, T'oegye position was softened in the following statement:

⁶¹ T'oegye, TGCS, 1: 407.

In the case of the Four, principle issues and material force follows in accordance with it; in the case of the Seven, material force issues and principle mounts it.⁶²

This formula is famous as T'oegye's culminating expression of the relationship of the Four and the Seven in terms of principle and material force. This reasoning presents a more dynamic and creative interpretation of principle as a form of transformative activity. T'oegye, in other words, reinterpreted principle to be a generative power inherent in the mind which not only defines human nature but also guides us to realize it according to its own direction. This is one of the distinctive features which T'oegye contributed in the history of Korean Neo-Confucianism which resulted from the Four-Seven debate.

In short, T'oegye's philosophical anthropology can be summarized in the following manner. Accepting Mencius' view of the goodness of original human nature and the Ch'eng-Chu's theory of the ontological omnipresence of principle, T'oegye believed that human being is born perfectly and essentially good by nature. In other words, for T'oegye, the original human nature, endowed by the Heavenly principle, is thought to be full of good and moral law; yet it is basically the unmanifest state before the feelings are aroused. Although the original human nature has the ontological identification of the Heavenly principle, the existential human nature is precarious and problematic since human existence becomes the

⁶² Ibid., 204.

physical human nature combined with material force, resulting in arising of feelings, involving good and evil. Ha-tae Kim aptly identifies this transitional characteristic of human nature with Paul Tillich's description of "the transition from the essence to the existence."⁶³ Thus, it is safe to say that, for T'oegye, human being as an existential being is an empirical self, which is fallen from the essence into existence with all the limitations of ego-consciousness, desires, instincts, anxiety, etc. Here, human being is challenged to reverse the transition for the restoration of the original nature of humanity.

Human Being as a Relational Self

Another fundamental part of T'oegye's philosophical anthropology lies in the character of interrelatedness of reality. Human beings, for T'oegye, are understood as relational selves. This concept of human being as a relational being draws from the Neo-Confucian understanding of the universe as an organic "unity" or "oneness," clarifying the fact that "principle is one but its manifestations are many or diverse"⁶⁴ and there is the unity of transcendence and immanence of principle.

⁶³ Ha-tai Kim, Dongseo churhak eui mannam (Encounter between eastern philosophy and western philosophy) (Seoul: Jongno seojuk,, 1985), 328. According to Paul Tillich, the fall of human beings is understood as the transition from essence to existence. See Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 2: 29.

⁶⁴ Fung, 298.

The question is in what sense this unity or oneness is meant. In addressing the question of the Neo-Confucian expression of “oneness” and discussing Ch’eng Hao’s doctrine of the unity of human being with heaven and Earth, William Theodore de Bary states that, “Man in his essential nature is identical with all nature, Heaven and Earth, and the substance of all things.”⁶⁵ Thus, the foundation of this unity is to be found in the identity between human nature, a nature of virtue, and life itself. From this point of view, a person shares with other human fellows in the life process, a process which extends to Heaven and Earth. The content of the life process is delineated in terms of human being’s virtuous nature. In this context, the sage has fully realized his/her own nature. He/she is aware of the principle within him/herself and all things. What unites the sage with all things is the understanding of a uniform principle, a virtuous nature within self and all else.

In his Diagram of the Western Inscription, T’oegye states, “Heaven is called the father and Earth is called the mother.”⁶⁶ This passage implies that T’oegye views Heaven and Earth as the common parents. T’oegye also maintains that all creatures have been born from the single common origin, and all of creation is a

⁶⁵ William Theodore de Bary, ed., The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 14.

⁶⁶ T’oegye, To Become a Sage, 51. This passage originally comes from Chang Tsai’s saying in the Western Inscription.

single body. All people, therefore form a single great family.⁶⁷ T'oegye illustrates the organic concept of universe as an one-body as follows:

All people are from the same womb [Heaven and Earth]as I am, all creatures are my companions. . . . By honoring those who are advance in years, I carry out the respect for age, and by kindness to the solitary and weak, I carry out the tender care for the young which should be paid to my young. . . . All persons in the world who are exhausted, decrepit, worn out, or ill, or who are brotherless, childless, widowers, or widowed, are my own brothers [and sisters].⁶⁸

This passage not only describes T'oegye's organic unity of reality but also provides the paradigm for proper relationships both in family and society, and thus one becomes a person of *in/jen* or humanity (often translated as "love" or "benevolence"), the crowning virtue of the Confucian tradition that expresses the essence of all proper human relationships. In other words, this unity is ethical in nature. All human beings are united through their common natures of *in/jen*, humanity. They are united not only with each other but with Heaven and earth and all things.

Thus, the "unity" or "oneness" is an "identity" of self and others through a common cosmo-ontological structure found within all things. This authentic idea of one-body of the reality is very similar to a process thought which holds the

⁶⁷ Ibid., 51-52.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

internal relationships of reality. For Whitehead, “dogs, amoebae, and even electronics are also best conceived as instances of being-in-the-world. The actual world of each existing thing is in turn a community of entities each of which is a being-in-the-world.”⁶⁹

The principle of one’s nature is the principle of the nature of Heaven and earth. Rodney Leon Taylor is right in saying, “Self and other are not identical as a category of being but rather the unity between them is established through the ethical nature of *in/jen* common to all things.”⁷⁰ Thus, the conceptualization of all creatures as forming one-body stemming from a single origin is a powerful foundation for Neo-Confucian attitudes and actions of selfless affection, i.e., as an expression of *in/jen*, for others.

In T’oegye’s system, metaphysically there is an inner connection between all things. What Mencius called the “feeling of commiseration” or the “unbearing mind” is simply an expression of this connection between ourselves and other things. For T’oegye, existentially, human being is the relational self: hence, to be is to be in relation. The true self is to be understood relationally. It often happens,

⁶⁹ John B. Cobb, Jr. and David Ray Griffin, Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 83.

⁷⁰ Rodney Leon Taylor, The Cultivation of Sagehood as a Religious Goal in Neo-Confucianism: A Study of Selected Writings of Kao P’an-lung, 1562-1626 (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, 1978), 6.

however, that our unbearing mind is obscured by selfish desires. In other words, the root of all evil in Confucian ethics is self-centeredness or selfish desires that cause disorder and disruption in the interrelated human community; hence the original unity is lost. What is necessary is simply to remember that originally there is a oneness between one-self and all things, and to act and live accordingly with sincerity and attentiveness seeking for humanity or benevolence (*in/jen*). It is a matter of treating others with the care and concern with which we treat ourselves. In this way, the original unity will be restored in due course, and this is the Way of humanity (*To/Tao*) which a sage should live up to. In this regard, T'oegye states:

For the learning of the sages consists in the seeking of humanity. It is necessary to deeply inculcate in oneself the intention [of becoming humane], and then understand that one makes up a single body with heaven and Earth and the myriad creatures.⁷¹

In short, for T'oegye, the true self is to be understood relationally, that is, in terms of a relational metaphysics according to which only relation, relating, is real. In other words, human being is relational by its cosmo-ontological nature; therefore, to be is to be relational. In reality, no separate individual self exists on its own. Nor is there any separate, individual self. This relational concept is affirmed in the Neo-Confucian expression of “unity” or “oneness” of universe. This Neo-Confucian employment of “unity” or “oneness” is to be understood then

⁷¹ T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 57-58.

as referring to a uniform ethical structure. In this context, the sage is the one who is keenly aware of this original structure. The sage also is the one who has a sense of propriety he/she bears towards Heaven, fellow human beings and all things and acts with reverence and seriousness seeking for *in/jen*.

A Sage as a Goal of Humanity

According to Lee Hae-myung, the primary goal of moral and spiritual self-cultivation in T'oegye's philosophical anthropology is to attain the fulfillment of sagehood, the achievement of ideal humanity.⁷² In T'oegye's doctrine of cosmos, as we have discussed, the Heavenly principle is not just a philosophical concept; it has ethical, moral, and spiritual implications. The fundamental Ch'eng-Chu teaching is that human nature is principle. This implies that the Heavenly principle is the principle of human nature. To realize the ultimate truth of human nature is to look inward to seek its inherent goodness. T'oegye's notion of human nature refers to what one may call potentially a genuine manifestation of the Heavenly principle. In the process of self-cultivation, the self can penetrate deeply into its own ground of existence, so that the mind-and-heart establishes a harmonious rhythm with Heaven, Earth, and all beings and things. For T'oegye, this quest for self-realization is identified with sagehood. Such an achievement of sagehood

⁷² Hae-Myung Lee, "T'oegye eui tonghap kyoyukron yeongu" (A study on T'oegye's integrative educational thought), T'oegyehak yeongu 3 (1990): 54.

through self-cultivation is T'oegye's essential part of his philosophical anthropology.

At this point, we turn to the question of sagehood. Sagehood has been characterized in various ways reflecting differences of individual Neo-Confucians. There exist, however, a broad area of agreement on the major features of sagehood. Sagehood may be considered as a particular way of looking at the world often expressed in terms of "a feeling of harmony" or "a sense of oneness" with all things. In his Reflections on Things at Hand, Chu Hsi quotes Chang Tsai's statement,

By enlarging one's mind, one can enter into all things in the world. As long as anything is not yet entered into, there is still something outside the mind. . . . The sage...fully develops his nature and does not allow what is seen or heard to fetter his mind.⁷³

This statement indicates that, for Chang Tsai, a feeling of unity between self and others is central to the definition of sagehood. Ch'eng Hao's expression, "The man of *in/jen* forms one body with all things without any differentiation,"⁷⁴ clearly indicates the import of a unitary view to the content of sagehood. Thus, this quality of "unity," seeing oneself and others as in some sense the one body, is inherent in the characterization of sagehood.

⁷³ Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 74-75.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 523.

In relation to the quality of “unity,” another important character of sagehood can be found in one’s attitude and behavior with reverential seriousness toward others. An attitude of reverence is fundamental to the conduct of a sage. A sage is the one who is reverent towards all things.⁷⁵ A sage is also serious in his/her consideration of others and in the sense of being dedicated in the effort and discipline required in learning.⁷⁶ In summary, a sage is the one who has a sense of organic “unity” of reality from a cosmo-ontological point of view: hence, seeks for *in/jen* with reverential seriousness, attitudes and actions for others from a moral-ethical point of view.

In regard to the concept of sagehood, let T’oegye speak of himself:

The sage properly orders human affairs according to the mean, correctness, humanity, and righteousness, taking quite as the essential; in this way one establishes the ultimate standard for a person.⁷⁷

When...one completely returns to the Single Origin, one will have arrived at the condition described as having exhaustively comprehended principle [of the heaven], fully realized one’s nature, and so completely fulfilled the Mandate [the imperative of the heaven].⁷⁸

⁷⁵ William de Bary, “Neo-Confucian Cultivation and the Seventeenth-Century Enlightenment,” in Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism, 157.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ T’oegye, To Become a Sage, 38.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 42.

These passages imply that, for T'oegye, a sage is not only a morally perfect one, but also one who is in attunement with the Way of Heaven. A sage is not only a learned one, but also a religiously enlightened one. According to Ha-tae Kim, "a sage is one who has attained perfection in all phases of cultivation, intellectual, moral and spiritual life of human being."⁷⁹ Thus, to become a sage is not merely to become a morally perfect being, but further a person who attains religious liberation through spiritual self-cultivation.

⁷⁹ Ha-tai Kim, 307.

Chapter 4

T'oegye's Educational Theory and Practice

In the previous chapter, we have explored the essentials of T'oegye's understanding of human nature. T'oegye believed that a person is born perfectly and essentially good by nature. At the same time, he acknowledged that the existential human nature is precarious and problematic since human existence becomes the physical human nature combined with material force, resulting in the arising of feelings, involving good and evil. In a word, for T'oegye, a person is an empirical self, which is fallen from the essence into existence with all the limitations of desires, instincts, and anxiety. In this context, a person is challenged to reverse the transition for the restoration of the original nature of humanity. This is what T'oegye called "sage-learning." The achievement of sagehood, which has a sense of organic unity of reality and seeks for *in/jen* with reverential seriousness, attitudes and actions for others, is the fundamental part of T'oegye's philosophical anthropology.

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to see how these characteristics of T'oegye's anthropology appropriated and incorporated into his theory and practices of education. In order to carry out this task, several fundamental questions must be raised. What was T'oegye's definition of education? How did T'oegye name the nature of educational activity? What was the purpose and aim of T'oegye's educational enterprise? How did T'oegye approach to that goal and

accomplish it? This chapter will attempt to answer these questions in relation to his doctrine of humanity.

The Nature and Purpose of Education

It is a difficult attempt to describe the nature of education conceived by T'oegye since he had never precisely defined it. Therefore, we need to draw clues from the various sources written by T'oegye and Neo-Confucian texts as well. As we recall, the Doctrine of Mean states; "What Heaven imparts to human being is called human nature. To follow human nature is called the Way. Cultivating the Way is called education."¹ Being faithful to this Ch'eng-Chu thought, T'oegye, in his "Address Presenting The Ten Diagrams on Sage Learning To King Sonjo," illustrates his understanding of the nature of educational activity as follows:

To learn means to make oneself thoroughly versed in a matter and actually put it into practice. . . . Thus thinking and learning mutually advance and mutually complete one another. . . . It is by the constant practice of reverential seriousness [or mindfulness, *kyung*] that one combines thought and learning; it is the single, consistent thread which runs through the states of both activity and quite.²

As for how one is to do this, he must preserve [the proper dispositions of] the mind by exercising strict composure and quiet recollection, and exhaustively investigate principle through study,

¹ Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 98.

² T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 34.

inquiry, and the exercise of thought and discernment.³

The practice of this kind of reverent fear and mindfulness is nothing extraordinary; it is simply part of every day life, but it can bring about the perfect equilibrium [of the mind before it is aroused] and perfect harmony [after it is aroused] establish [heaven and earth] in their proper positions and accomplish the nature of [of all thing].

Virtuous conduct is simply a matter of proper human relationships, but through it the wondrous unity of Heaven and man is attained.⁴

Putting them all together, we may conclude that, for T'oegye, education means the whole process of "leading out"⁵ people to the accomplishment of the original nature through the cultivation and rectification of their mind for the fulfillment of sagehood. Here, we can see one of the most distinguishable characteristics of T'oegye's understanding of educational activity. In a word, his educational activity aims at the total person. As Thomas Groome points out, we have been greatly disappointed by limiting educational activity to "a narrow intellectualism, an affair of the mind alone."⁶ T'oegye's understanding of education, it embraces all aspects of human activity, including the cognitive, the affective, and the behavioral. It must be noted that, as stated earlier, Neo-Confucian thought sees

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 36.

⁵ The etymology of the word "education" comes from "educare" meaning "leading out." See Thomas H. Groome, Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 5.

⁶ Ibid., 21.

human mind as a whole entity, combining the intellectual, the affectional, and the ethical. This is why T'oegye called his approach to the path way for the learning for sagehood as *simhak* or the learning of mind-and-heart. This subject will be explored in detail later.

In regards to T'oegye's understanding of the nature of educational activity, another point must be noted. In a word, T'oegye's educational enterprise encompasses the three dimensions of time: the past, the present, and the future. T'oegye had been faithful to the past, namely, the ancient wisdom of knowledge and disciplines of learning, for he believed that the classics of all sages contained moral principle, and that proper reading and comprehending them would make principle clear to the learner. However, he had never neglected the present dimension of the learner's life experience because he believed that the Heavenly principle manifest itself in our daily life experiences. Therefore, T'oegye's students were asked to seek the particularization of principle in their present life experience.

In the context of educational activity, therefore, the learner must be in a present active and reflective state. Furthermore, to T'oegye, like other Neo-Confucians, concerns of education were not limited to the past and the present, but open to the

future, namely, making the world tranquil.⁷ Thus, T'oegye's understanding of the nature of educational activity held past, present, and future in a dialectical and fruitful tension with one another.

Education, in its normative use, can be defined as a process for improving a person. An educational theory, which gives a comprehensive prescription for educational content, method, and plan, begins with an assumption about an educated person—that a certain kind of individual is what the education is to produce. In T'oegye's view, an ideal educated person is a sage who has not only realized the ultimate truth of human nature, but also practiced it in his/her daily life experiences. In his Diagram of the Elementary Learning, T'oegye states,

Only the sage possesses the full, vigorous perfection of the inborn nature. . . . The method in Elementary learning was have students sprinkle water and sweep the hall, answer and respond to questions, act filial in their homes and obediently when abroad, and to see to it that their actions there would be no violation of the rules of propriety.⁸

⁷ T'oegye, in his Songhaksipto, quotes the first chapter of the "Great Learning": "The Way of great learning consists in making illustrious virtue manifest, renewing the people,, and abiding. . .; when one's person is cultivated, the family will be regulated; when the family is regulated, the state will be ordered; when the state is well ordered, the world will be tranquil." See T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 84-85. Such an futuristic utopian dimension of education was also maintained by Paulo Freire. See Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos, rev. ed. (New York: Continuum, 1983).

⁸ T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 68.

This remark implies that, for T'oegye, the primary purpose of education is to produce a sage who restores his/her inborn original nature and acts in accordance with it. A sage constantly cultivates humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom inherent in human nature. A sage also vigorously acts in accord with the rules of *orun* or proper social behavior:

... expressing affection between parent and child, maintaining righteousness between ruler and minister, keeping the distinction between husband and wife, respecting the order of precedence between the elder and the younger and showing trust among friends.⁹

The aim of T'oegye's *songhak* or "the learning of sagehood" is to cultivate such a person, one who can contain virtues within oneself and practice the Way in daily affairs.

It is also true that T'oegye's *songhak* or "the learning for sagehood" has a significant religious dimension. For T'oegye, it involves a combination of a higher state of intellectual discipline, contemplative, and virtuous life with spiritual consciousness. The ethico-religious dimension of T'oegye's Neo-Confucianism reveals spiritual experience of unity between the self and the universe. Implicit in his practice of cultivating Heaven's principle as sagehood points to what Tu Wei-

⁹ T'oegye, in Songhaksipto, quotes this statement. See T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 68.

ming calls "a covenant with Heaven," for it is to "fulfill the highest human aspiration of forming a trinity with Heaven and earth."¹⁰ In T'oegye's view, original human nature itself is to be found in sagehood because it shares the same reality with Heaven's principle. The key to his *kyonghak* or the learning of reverential seriousness, therefore, is that one must experience the ultimate reality of Heaven's principle as one's own inner nature. In a sense, this is religious, insofar as T'oegye maintains that such a process should be done contemplatively and spiritually in the mind-and-heart. In his view, the mind is not only a rational and emotional entity, but, more important, something that has its own ultimate reality in the form of human nature in itself. He identified it as sagehood or Heaven's principle. Such a view of the mind suggests a religious process of self-cultivation, the ultimate goal of which to cultivate sagehood.

Educational Practices

Although the original human nature has the ontological identification of mind and heavenly principle, the existential human nature is precarious and problematic. This is because human existence is nature combined with material force, resulting in the arising of feelings as a lost endowment of the original state in egoistic structure. This has been called "the transition from the essence to the existence."

¹⁰ Wei-ming Tu, Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1976), 99.

Here, human being is challenged to reverse the transition for the restoration of the original nature. In order to accomplish this reverse transition T'oegye has put his emphasis on education, namely *sunghak* or "sage learning." Classical Confucianism, of course, taught the ideal of sage, but it remained there more as an ideal than as a practical goal. T'oegye made this lofty ideal a goal, realistically attainable for everybody through self-cultivation.¹¹

In this section, the focus is on becoming a sage, especially in relation to the ideas of *song/ch'eng* or "sincerity," *kyong* or "reverential seriousness," and "the extension of knowledge" and "the investigation of things." These fundamental concepts are closely interrelated in T'oegye's doctrine of sage learning and are crucial to the understanding of T'oegye's principles of the following educational practices.

Songhak (Sage Learning)

It is important to remember that the means to self-realization in Neo-Confucianism is the path of knowledge. The Great Learning states:

Those who wishes to cultivate their personal lives would first rectify their minds. Those who wish to rectify their minds would first make their wills sincere. Those who wished to make their wills sincere would first extend their knowledge. The extension of knowledge consists in the investigation of things. When things are investigated,

¹¹ T'oegye expressed his strong conviction in the attainability of sagehood in the following passage; "What sort of man was Shun [sage]? What sort of man am I? If I try, I too can be as he was [for he was too an ordinary human being]." See T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 34.

knowledge is extended, the will becomes sincere; when the will is sincere, the mind is rectified; when the mind is rectified, the personal life is cultivated.¹²

The rectification of the mind is to transcend the affections of the mind caused by feelings. The Great Learning makes it clear that emotional arousings are hindrance of the mind as we read in the following statement:

What is meant by saying that cultivation of the personal life depends on the rectification of the mind is that, when one is affected by wrath to any extent, his mind will not be correct. When one is affected by fear to any extent, his mind will not be correct. When he is affected by fondness to any extent, his mind will be correct. When the mind is not present, we look but not to see, listen but not to hear, and eat but do not know the taste of the food. This is what is meant by saying that the cultivation of the personal life depends on the rectification of the mind.¹³

To return to the original nature, Neo-Confucians teach that we must rectify the mind by suppressing the emotional affections caused by feelings. When the mind is rectified, we can become a sage who shows a full manifestation of nature, which means the union of self with the nature of Heaven. Neo-Confucianism describes this mystical consciousness negatively, in terms of vacuity, and positively, in terms of *song/ch'eng* (sincerity).¹⁴ As a result, *song* has become one of the most

¹² Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 86.

¹³ Ibid., 90.

¹⁴ Ha-tai Kim, 333.

important concepts in Neo-Confucianism. In this respect, Ha-tai Kim provides us with a comprehensible picture of *song* in the following statement:

Sincerity is the state of the sage's mind. . . . On the hand, sincerity is a name for the mystical consciousness which transcends all emotional afflictions. It may be described as the state of liberation, salvation and self-transcendence. On the other hand, sincerity is the subjective attitude of the aspirant, which signifies the sincerity of the will, or the purity of heart, or 'to will one thing' (Kierkegaard), or 'good faith instead of self-deception' (Sartre).¹⁵

The human effort to attain sincerity, which is the Way of Human Being, is expressed by the Neo-Confucianists in another important concept, namely, *kyong* (reverential seriousness). T'oegye identifies sincerity as the ultimate state of sagehood and reverential seriousness as the means to accomplish the state of sincerity in the following passage:

Sincerity is the way of Heaven. The attainment of sincerity is the way of man. It is that which all men of learning should strive. If one wishes to launch into sincerity, all he has to do is to be serious.¹⁶

T'oegye also states, "*Kyong* is the master of the mind and the foundation of all things."¹⁷ *Kyong* is a way of managing oneself and is the power that helps one to truth. To be more concrete, according to Chu Hsi, seriousness means to

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ T'oegye, TGCS, 1: 294.

¹⁷ Ibid., 203.

concentrate on one thing.¹⁸ The place and role of *kyong* in sage learning in relation to "the investigation of principle" will be explored in detail later.

With the importance of *kyong*, in Neo-Confucianism, there are more important ideas for the essential way of learning in attaining sagehood, known as "the extension of knowledge" and "the investigation of things." Ch'eng I states that "self-cultivation requires seriousness; the pursuit of learning depends on the extension of knowledge."¹⁹ They are, however, not to be considered as separate, but interrelated with each other. It, therefore, can be said that *kyong* is the substance of and condition for the extension of knowledge. These ideas, "the extension of knowledge" and "the investigation of things," appear in the Great Learning in the following statement:

Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things.²⁰

However, it must be remembered that the knowledge here is more than the Confucian classics, although learning of them is required. The knowledge ultimately aims at the knowledge of the Way, Truth, and Principle, whereby the

¹⁸ Ha-tai Kim, 336.

¹⁹ Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 562.

²⁰ Ibid., 86.

possessor of this knowledge is virtually enlightened, restoring his original nature. So the extension of knowledge is the Confucian way of liberation and salvation. Ch'eng I express the essence of this ideas as follows: "In the pursuit of learning, we must aim at the Way, and in being a man, we must aim at being a sage."²¹ In terms of the extension of knowledge and the investigation of things, we need to look at the statement of Chu Hsi:

What sages and worthies call extensive learning means to study everything. From the most essential and most fundamental about oneself to every single thing or affair in the world, even the meaning of one word or half of a word, everything should be investigated to the utmost, and none of it is unworthy of attention. Although we cannot investigate all, still we have to keep on devoting our attention to them in accordance with our intelligence and ability, and in time there will necessarily be some accomplishment.²²

Thus, the Neo-Confucian scholars believed that there is a principle in everything, and principles of all the myriad things are brought into one which is the Supreme Ultimate. So the investigation of things is to discover the principle of things; and by knowing the principle of things, one is led to the understanding of the Supreme Ultimate.

In summary, for T'oegye, to be a sage means the radical transformation of the total being. It is not just becoming a morally respectable being. It is experiencing

²¹ Wing-tsit Chan, trans., Reflections on Things at Hand: The Neo-Confucian Anthology, comp. by Hsi Chu and Lu Tsu-ch'ien (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 66.

²² Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 610.

a complete understanding, resulting from the investigation of things, which practically means long and concentrated thinking and thus returning to the original state of being. To be a sage is therefore not merely a matter of moral perfection, but a matter of ultimate transformation, resulting in a mystical union with the Supreme Reality and other human beings. I do believe that this idea of sage learning is the most essential and fundamental element in T'oegye's educational theory and practices.

Simhak (The Learning of Mind-Heart)
and the Method of Quiet Sitting

The Mencian doctrine of human nature demands one's effort to seek out lost mind or to return to the original goodness of human nature. On the one hand, in order to achieve the fulfillment of one's original humanity, one needs to suppress and overcome of the human mind which is always precarious and prone to error, and impartial involving both good and evil. On the other hand, one also needs to preserve and nourish the moral mind which is always good and subtle. This is part of the reasons that, on the whole, T'oegye's *simhak* (the learning of mind-and-heart) emphasizes "suppressing human desires and preserving Heaven's principle."²³ The question, then, is how does one cultivate the human mind and

²³ T'oegye, TGCS, 2: 259.

preserve the moral mind? To this question, T'oegye seriously committed himself to the topics of “quiet sitting” and “abiding in reverential seriousness (*kogyong*).”

In regard to the method of quiet sitting as one of the practices of mind cultivation, T'oegye was influenced by the Sung Neo-Confucian Li T'ung (1088-1163), one of the Chu Hsi's teachers.²⁴ For Li T'ung, quiet sitting served as a contemplative exercise to help one penetrate into the essence of one's inner nature.²⁵ As he told his disciples, T'oegye found Li's method useful to experience the mind-in-itself.²⁶ As he asserted, Li referred to it as a method of “examining the unmanifest mind in the state of quietude before the arousal of feelings.”²⁷ Unlike, Li T'ung, however, T'oegye argued that such an experience should not preclude an establishment of relation with the mind in its manifest state. In other words, the role of the manifest mind is significant in the whole process of moral self-cultivation. T'oegye stated, “Only after the practice of quiet sitting, can one collect the body and the mind so that moral principles can be united together.”²⁸ For the practice of T'oegye's *simhak*, then, the first thing to do is to collect the

²⁴ Chung, 131.

²⁵ de Bary, ed., The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism, 19-30.

²⁶ T'oegye, TGCS, 4: 180.

²⁷ Ibid., 2: 238.

²⁸ Ibid., 4: 176.

dispersed self according to moral principles. This helps one's search for the original substance of human nature. In other words, it is a contemplative, spiritual discipline that ought to simultaneously integrate one's intellectual insight and moral effort. T'oegye referred to it as the essence of becoming a sage.

For T'oegye, human nature in itself is identical to Heaven's principle, the absolutely good and pure reality. From an experiential standpoint of self-cultivation, his theory and practice of *simhak* emphasize the virtuous and transcendent dimension of *i/li* as something to be contemplative realized and internally cultivated in the mind-and-heart. For this reason, T'oegye's approach to *simhak* addresses *kyong* or "reverential seriousness" as the most important attitudinal virtue to be cultivated in mind cultivation. This is the focus of our next inquiry.

Kyonghak (The Learning of Reverential Seriousness)

To depart from evil and follow good is, according to T'oegye, to "abide in reverential seriousness."²⁹ This approach leads one to realizing Heaven's principle, the ultimate reality of sagehood. T'oegye speaks of *kyonghak* (the learning of reverential seriousness) and *songhak* (the learning of sagehood) as complementary terms, and this is clearly stated in his major writings such as Songhak sipto, Chonmyong tosol, etc.

²⁹ Ibid., 2: 94.

The locus of classics for the Confucian ideas of *kyong* includes the Book of Changes, Book of Rites, and Analects. According to the Book of Changes, “The superior person (*gunja*) applies reverential seriousness in order to strengthen the inner life and righteousness in order to square the outer life.”³⁰ In the Book of Rites we also read: “The superior person never lacks reverential seriousness.”³¹ Confucius also emphasized: “Be serious and reverent in handling all affairs.”³² Sung Neo-Confucians cited these passages to emphasize reverential seriousness in the Confucian way of self-cultivation. Ch’eng Hao, for example, said: “Reverential seriousness simply means a way of managing oneself.”³³ It also means unselfishness. When one lacks it, “thousands of selfish desires arise to injure one’s humanity.”³⁴ Ch’eng I said, “self-cultivation requires reverential seriousness”³⁵ and “be correct in movement and appearance and be orderly in thoughts and deliberation and be correct in your dress and dignified in your

³⁰ Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 264.

³¹ Ibid., 520.

³² Ibid., 14.

³³ Ibid., 560.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

gaze.”³⁶ Chu Hsi emphasized that one should apply it to the practice of moral cultivation and maintain righteousness in handling daily affairs. For example, he said “seriousness merely means the mind being its own master.”³⁷ He also states:

It [to be serious] is merely to be apprehensive and careful and dare not give free rein to oneself. In this way both body and mind will be collected and concentrated as if one is apprehensive of something. If one can always be like this, one’s disposition will naturally be changed. Only when one has succeeded in preserving this mind can one engage in study.³⁸

On the whole, these Chinese Neo-Confucians interpreted *kyong* as an attitude of reverent piety toward Heaven and Earth, as well as an intellectual and moral seriousness in handling things and human relationships. As Ha-tai Kim points out, it is also evident that Neo-Confucian formulas on the human mind are quite different from Taoist’s sitting in forgetfulness and Buddhist’s meditation, by replacing this negative description of the mind by *kyong* which is the most positive state of the mind.³⁹

How, then, did T’oegye interpret this key Confucian concept in the context of his theory and practices for the learning of sagehood? For T’oegye, reverential

³⁶ Ibid., 607.

³⁷ Ibid., 606.

³⁸ Ibid., 607.

³⁹ Ha-tai Kim, 308.

seriousness is his goal and the method of moral and spiritual cultivation. Chu Hsi merely emphasized it in the Neo-Confucian learning of mind cultivation, without giving an elaborate interpretation of it. On the contrary, T'oegye preached in Korea that *kyong* is the most important virtue to be cultivated. T'oegye states emphatically that "in these ten diagrams, I made *kyong* the dominant spirit and guide."⁴⁰ As we have discussed, the Ch'eng-Chu tradition offered the two methods of sage learning, namely, *kungri* or "the investigation of principle" and *keokyong* or "the abiding in reverential seriousness" *keokyong*. Many students of T'oegye, however, agree that T'oegye placed his emphasis on the exercise of reverential seriousness while he did not minimize the importance of the investigation of principle to the utmost.⁴¹

What, then, is the relationship between the mind and *kyong*? As we have discussed, Neo-Confucianism gives a metaphysical support for holding fast to seriousness when scholars discuss seriousness in relation to the mind. The basic assumption of Neo-Confucianism is that human nature is endowed with the principle of heaven, which is originally pure and good. But when the mind is in contact with the external stimuli, feelings are aroused. Since the feelings are

⁴⁰ T'oegye, TGCS, 1: 203.

⁴¹ Wan-jae Lee, "Modern Implications of T'oegye's Idea of *kyong*," T'oegye hakbo 14 (1977): 77.

sometimes good and sometimes bad, it is important that the mind must preserve the original purity of the mind. Therefore, the first meaning of holding to seriousness is to preserve the mind before the mind is not yet aroused. The state of mind which is not yet aroused is often referred by the Sung Neo-Confucian scholars to equilibrium. In this regard, Chu Hsi says:

If one can in one's daily life and at leisurely moments decidedly collect one's mind right here, that is the equilibrium before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are aroused, and is the undifferentiated principle of heaven.⁴²

Since human nature is the substance of the mind, it is necessary that one must preserve the mind and nourish the nature.

But when the mind is aroused, it is necessary to observe reflectively the feelings and wills which are the function of the mind. In regard to this exercise of reflective observation, Chu Hsi states:

As things and affairs approach, the mind can clearly see which is right and which is wrong accordingly. What is right is the principle of nature, and what is wrong is in violation of the principle of nature. If one can always collect the mind like this, it would be as if one holds the scale and balance to measure things.⁴³

In other words, the second meaning of reverential seriousness is the

⁴² Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, 606.

⁴³ Ibid.

reflective observation with which the mind can discern clearly what is good or right and what is bad or wrong.

This dual application of *kyong* before and after the issuance of the mind is observed by T'oegye in such a way that the exercise of *kyong* consists of preserving and nourishing the moral mind on the one hand, and reflective observation of human mind on the other hand. T'oegye sufficiently illustrates this point in the following passages:

When the feelings are not yet issued, one must be engaged in preserving and nourishing. And when the feelings are already issued, one must cultivate the habit of reflection and observation.⁴⁴

Hence, before the mind is manifest, the learning of the superior person is to take reverential seriousness as the first principle and give full effort to preserving and nourishing. After the mind manifest it is to give full effort to self-examination and self-reflection.⁴⁵

In the Chonmyong tosol, T'oegye also refers to the “learning of the superior persons” as the “learning of reverential seriousness,” maintaining the Mencian doctrine that the task of “preserving moral mind and nourishing human nature” is the essence of *kyonghak*.⁴⁶ Accordingly, in T'oegye's Neo-Confucian system, *simhak* is none other than *kyonghak*, the key to the learning for sagehood.

⁴⁴ T'oegye, TGCS, 1: 205.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 3: 144.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

It must also be emphasized that reverential seriousness is not only the psychological attitude of the student. It always accompanies by certain behavioral and external expressions. T'oegye strongly emphasizes the proper observation of the rules of propriety as the external dimension of self-cultivation which designates the traditional Confucian teaching. He demands his students to conform to the proper appearance and behavior as if they are standing before God, as it is described in the first paragraph of Kyong Jae Jam (the Diagram of the Admonition for Mindfulness Studio) in his Songhak sipto.⁴⁷

As we have seen, T'oegye's system of *kyonghak* as the method of sage learning presents to us a holistic approach to educational practices, including the cognitive, the affectional, the behavioral, and the spiritual aspects of human faculty.

Developmental Theory and Practices

Although T'oegye's students were not children, T'oegye recognized the importance of education for children and sees education as a life-long process.⁴⁸ Educational procedures recommended by him seem to have been tailored to different stages of development. In childhood education, he stressed the role of

⁴⁷ T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 178-180.

⁴⁸ T'oegye, in his The Ten Diagrams on Sage Learning, included the Elementary Learning (*sohak*) along with the Great Learning (*Taejak*). This illustrates not only that sage learning begins from childhood, but also that the Neo-Confucian way of learning for sagehood requires practicing of moral behaviors in daily life experiences.

parents and teachers in guiding and teaching the child.⁴⁹ For him the concern was how to nurture the goodness immanent in the child and to prevent it from being contaminated by impurity. At the earliest stages, he seems to have relied mainly on maintaining the right environment. It was the primary importance to provide the child with an environment in which the child would be exposed only to good influences and shielded from evil influences, and this should begin at the earliest possible moment.

As already noticed, the right environment and a suitable/proper paradigm were essential element to the childhood education in T'oegye's educational principles. Mencius' mother, who moved three times before she settled near a school, was taken as the model for child rearing.

What is noticeable in this progression of instruction and socialization of the child endorsed by T'oegye is that behavioral training was emphasized. In fact, T'oegye in his Songhakipto quotes Chu Hsi's a preface to the Elementary Learning as follows:

The elementary schools of ancient times taught manners of sprinkling and sweeping, and the ways of affection for parents, respect for elders, appreciation of teachers, and consideration for friends. It was because [they] regarded [these] as the foundation of self-cultivation, family regulation, the government of the state and

⁴⁹ In his "Exhortation To Teachers and Students of the Four Academies," T'oegye asked teachers to be a model of proper social behavior and correct ritual. See T'oegye, TGCS, 2: 340.

peace in the world. [They] made absolutely certain that instruction and practice [in these] would start in early years, so that while practicing, intelligence might develop, while changing, the mind might be formed and so there would be no problem of inability in overcoming obstacles.⁵⁰

T'oegye seems to be suggesting that at this early age, the exercise of proper behavior would facilitate intellectual growth and that this was an effective means of developing human mind. While behavioral development seems to have been stressed, the educational premise involved was not based on a mechanistic view of humanity. That is, education was not regarded merely as a process of inculcating the values of the society by manipulating external behavior. Rather than viewing it as the imposition of social values on the child, to T'oegye, education was seen as a development of what was already in the child. In fact, the heavy reliance on behavioral instruction in the early stages seems to be devised in recognition of the internal state of the child rather than denial of it. After all, the intellectual abilities of the child at this stage were limited and the cognitive power of child's mind to discern moral law was still undeveloped.

When the child reaches about fifteen years of age, he/she is considered to have

⁵⁰ T'oegye, in the "Diagram of the Elementary Learning" of Songhak sipto, quotes Chu Hsi's preface to the Elementary Learning. See T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 68.

achieved adulthood.⁵¹ Now the child enters Confucian college (*taehak*) and, like other Neo-Confucianists, T'oegye considered the student at this age as beginning his education as a scholar and ultimately a sage.⁵² T'oegye believed that one's mind at this age was capable of reason and discernment and he/she was equipped with basic intellectual abilities. For this reason, beginning with the learning of the Great Learning at Confucian college, T'oegye shifted his emphasis in education from teaching by others (teachers) to self-effort for investigating of things, through which one achieves his/her own fullest consciousness. In this respect, T'oegye states:

Only when one has become habituated to the exercise of mental self-possession and self-reflection in the context with such matters [the heavenly principle manifested in the daily life experience and practice it] is what one knows real; when one attains this it is true learning.⁵³

This transition was neither sudden nor final. In the child education, the student was constantly exhorted to exert himself in order to understand and assimilate the teaching he received. In T'oegye's educational process, as I have already pointed out, the teacher's role in transmitting the sage's teachings and in providing a paradigm for the students in their striving for moral perfection was particularly

⁵¹ Sa-soon Yun, T'oegye sunjip (Selected writings of T'oegye), 22.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ T'oegye, TGCS, 2: 829.

valued. With their abilities reasonably developed, the students were now in a position to receive more meaningful instruction from the teacher and respond to it. Thus, the assignment of a major role to the self in adult education was more a question of initiative and attitude. It was now oneself who should seek instruction from teachers and others as well, and one's progress depended on one's effort.

More importantly, T'oegye's education system demands an unending-life-long process. For T'oegye, the purpose of achieving full consciousness of mind was to be moral and this was a manner of living, not a project which could, after a certain span of time, be terminated. In T'oegye's educational theory and practice, moral cultivation that the student was to begin would continue long after any kind of formal education had ceased.

Curriculum

Curriculum, as the content to be taught in a restricted sense, can be considered as a direct expression of the concept of an educated man and woman in a extended sense. It consists of the kind of knowledge that a society desires an educated man to possess. After all, any society which considers itself civilized wants to transmit to the future generations a corpus of knowledge to insure future progress and the continuity of its civilization. The kind of knowledge that T'oegye regarded as essential for the future generation was moral knowledge, and he saw certain books

as the depository of the moral knowledge of all ages, and so he placed a special emphasis on them.

Certainly, not all the Confucian classics belong to this category. Moreover, there should be an order in which important books were to be read, reflecting the student's cognitive and intellectual readiness. T'oegye recommended the Elementary Learning for young students. When the student attained basic intellectual abilities, he recommended starting with the Four Books in a certain sequence: the Great Learning, Analects, the Book of Mencius, and then the Doctrine of the Mean. Lastly, he included the Complete Works of Chu Hsi.⁵⁴ He believed that these classics contained moral knowledge, proper reading and understanding them would make principle clear to the student.⁵⁵

What, then, about reading methodology? T'oegye, in his letter to Kim Song-il, states:

It [the method of reading books] is only a matter of ripening. In all reading of books, although one may clearly understand the meaning of the text, if it is not ripened, as soon as it is read it is forgotten, and it is certain that one cannot preserve it in his mind-and -heart. After study one must further apply oneself to becoming thoroughly versed and ripened in it; only then will he be able to preserve it in his mind-and-heart and be thoroughly steeped in its taste.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Donald Munro, The Concept of Man in Early China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), 98-99.

⁵⁵ Sa-soon Yun, T'oegye sunjip (The Selected Writings of T'oegye), 25.

⁵⁶ T'oegye, TGCS, 2: 792.

Ripening as the culminating state of reading books, then, is the profound personal understanding and appropriation of principle through the gradual process of deep reflection and attentive experience in daily life. Thus, the method of book reading conceived by T'oegye goes beyond the type of abstract mental exercise: rather, it signifies a holistic nature of the learning process. It must also be noted that ripening is a gradual and natural process. T'oegye, in his letter to Lee Suk-hon, illustrates this point this point:

In what one investigates, sometimes one meets with complexities and intricacies that using all his strength he cannot get through, or sometimes one's nature happens to have a blind spot on the matter and it is difficult to force illumination and break it open. Then one ought to set the matter aside and approach another and investigate it. In this way, investigation one thing and then another, there is an accumulation which deepens and ripens; the mind naturally gradually clears and the actuality of moral principle gradually becomes manifests to one's eye.⁵⁷

Pedagogy

Once the content of education is identified, the next question is how to transmit this body of knowledge to students. Transmission, by definition, is an act which requires participation of both the transmitter (teacher) and the receiver (student). But questions remain concerning how and to what degree each party should participate in the process, and this in part constitutes pedagogy. It is also true that pedagogy is closely tied to the concept of humanity. T'oegye viewed a person as

⁵⁷ Ibid., 1: 372.

possessing an innate moral knowledge and a potential to follow moral law. In this respect, education, then was meant to realize this potential inherent in a person, and, consequently, the role of the teacher was to provide the proper environment, stimulus, and guidance to the student to fulfill his/her potential.

Given this idea of education as a process of discovering truth by enhancing what was inherent, active participation by the student was reviewed as essential. The role of the student, thus, was not the passive reception of knowledge and skills through a training process, but rather, a process of development through participation.

In his letter to Nam Si-bo, T'oegye stressed on the importance of discussion with the teacher and fellow students as well in the following passage:

The righteous Principle can't be attained by oneself. The attainment of it must be cosponsored by one's teacher and fellow students as well. The key to the successful learning depends on the power of the corporate work among fellow men.⁵⁸

Thus, T'oegye's students were encouraged to actively participate in sharing their own ideas and raising their questions with their teachers and fellow students as well. T'oegye's students were expected to explore and discover truth by themselves, though presumably with the assistance of their teacher and fellow students.

⁵⁸ Sa-soon Yun, T'oegye sunjip (The Selected Writings of T'oegye), 66-67.

If the learner's active participation in the process of education was taken seriously, the motivation of learning will be required. T'oegye instinctively knew the importance of motivation: therefore, he addressed the necessity of arousing the learner's interest and expressed an intention to compose poems to be sung by boys.⁵⁹

Daily Life Experience as Curriculum

Though formal education may have been important in the development of Confucian students, it should be viewed in the total context of their life experiences. T'oegye states:

We may see the manifestation of the Heaven's Principle in/through every aspect of our life experiences. Its particularization's are in our doings and our non-doings as well; in our speech and in our silence as well. This Principle of the Way manifest itself only in our daily life experience.”⁶⁰

This saying is meaningful and significant to us. As already noted, because T'oegye believed that the immanence of the Heaven's Principle is not only in human nature but also in things and affairs in our daily life, T'oegye's students were required to seek for its particularization in their life experiences. Hence, their behavioral-moral cultivation and development were significant parts of their

⁵⁹ T'oegye, "Dosan sipigok," (Twelve songs of Dosan) T'oegyehak yeongu 3 (1989): 11-12.

⁶⁰ Sa-soon Yun, T'oegye sunjip (Selected writings of T'oegye), 66-67.

education. For this reason, T'oegye paid his primary attention to the experiential process of learning.

Conclusion

Born and raised in the politically oppressed, socially discriminated, and morally corrupted context, T'oegye experienced the danger of misidentifying the original moral qualities endowed by the Heaven's principle with the selfish human desires. In this context, T'oegye's primary mission was to preserve and nourish the moral mind, which was perfectly good, and control the human mind, which contained the seeds of selfish desire and was prone to error, to act in accord with moral principle. That was why T'oegye emphasized the Four Beginnings in light of the Mencian doctrine of the goodness of human nature and the Ch'eng-Chu view of the priority of principle over material force insofar as the Four Beginnings should be considered as the genuine roots of moral self-cultivation.

At first glance, one may argue that T'oegye is a somewhat conservative thinker who depended substantially on the authority of his masters, especially from the Ch'eng-Chu school. On the one hand, his usual habit was to quote a great deal of classical and Ch'eng-Chu teachings and defend Ch'eng-Chu teachings against all opposing views or ideas; on the other hand, however, he articulated, under Kobong's challenge, his views by moving beyond Chu Hsi's thinking. If he was not afraid of criticizing his masters, he, then, could maintain himself as a creative

and independent thinker who depended less on his literal authority and more on his own ideas and interpretations.

In regard to Neo-Confucian metaphysics, T'oegye's Four-Seven thesis deliberately maintains the ontological separability and conceptual distinction of *i* and *ki*. From an epistemological standpoint, T'oegye definitely maintains a clear-cut theory of the distinction between the transcendent and virtuous realm of *i*, on the one hand, and the physical, emotional, and material realm of *ki*, on the other. In this regard, we may consider him as a dualistic thinker. On the whole, however, he emphasizes the priority of *i* especially in the context of moral and spiritual self-cultivation. In other words, one may argue that he is an idealist who points to the importance of holding fast to the transcendent and virtuous of *i*. By doing so, he tends to de-emphasizes the natural, physical, and emotional realm of *ki*, neglecting the actual reality of phenomenal world. If he focused on the more mutual, interdependent, and dialectical relationship between *i* and *ki*, he could actively participate in practical learning, government administration, and social-political reform.

T'oegye, however, does full justice to his belief that the Four Beginnings should be understood in terms of *i* and the Seven Emotions *ki*. The peculiarity and ingenuity of his argument abide in his ability to formulate a creative theory, from the outset, that what Mencius called the Four are moral qualities initiated by *i*, which is full of goodness. The Seven are to be understood as the manifestation of

ki because they are easily agitated by physical and material conditions. To say, for example, that commiseration (the beginning of benevolence), unlike the emotion of anger, is manifest from *i* is, therefore, to emphasize the innate moral status of the Four in the Mencian spirit. T'oegye's task was, in fact, to provide a meaningful theory of the Four and the Seven in such a context. As we have observed before, this is a moral issue with profound implications for the practice of self-cultivation. Throughout the whole Four-Seven debate, T'oegye maintained that the purely moral nature of the Four aroused by principle should not be confused with the emotional and physical nature of the Seven aroused by material force in both conceptual and moral contexts. In other words, for T'oegye, education as the practice of moral self-cultivation aiming the achievement of full humanity requires such an understanding of the Four-Seven contrast.

For T'oegye, education means a holistic process which enables people (the learner and the teacher as well) to lead out to the fulfillment of sagehood through the cultivation of mind. Such a nature of educational activity conceived by T'oegye aims toward the ultimate transformation of full humanity. The fundamental educational ideas and practices advocated by T'oegye had been centered around the wholeness of humanity. His ideal educated person is a sage who restores his/her original nature. For T'oegye, a sage also is the one who not only has the experience of unity between the self and the universe, but also acts properly in one's social relationships in accordance with the heavenly principle.

The educational methodology (the investigation of principle and the exercise of reverential seriousness) to achieve sagehood involves a higher state of intellectual discipline, contemplative, and virtuous life and spiritual consciousness. This implies that to be a sage demands a radical transformation of the total self, including the cognitive, the affectional, the behavioral, and the spiritual aspects of humanity entity.

Reflecting upon what we have discussed, we may conclude that T'oegye's educational theory and practice appropriated by his Neo-Confucian doctrine of humanity, are valuable for formulating the theory and practice of religious education for today and tomorrow in the following points. First, T'oegye reminds us of the fact that education is the primary means to fulfill the wholeness of humanity. Second, T'oegye's organic philosophical view of reality provides us with the hope in formulating the theory and practice of religious education, which enables us to overcome "the pain of disconnection,"⁶¹ helps us restore the original connection, and act with reverence and seriousness seeking for *in/jen*. Third, T'oegye encourages us to overcome our dualistic view (the paradigm of "either or") as to either theory or practice, either the cognitive or the affectional, either knowledge or action, either learning from texts or learning through experience,

⁶¹ Palmer, x.

either the personal or the social, and so on. Those implications will be further explored in the last chapter of this study.

Chapter 5

Wesley's Life and Learning

The purpose of this chapter is to bring John Wesley as a partner of dialogue with Yi T'oegye in developing a model of Christian religious education for the formation of full humanity. John Wesley led a major movement of spiritual revival in eighteenth-century England, which eventually led to the formation of the Methodist Church and spread across the world, taking many forms. Wesley was a minister, scholar, reformer, and educator, whose influence, along with that of his brother Charles, continues to shape Methodist Churches and ecumenical and global Christian community.

To understand Wesley's education system, we need to understand the socio-historical context and educational structures of the eighteenth-century England into which Wesley was born and raised. We need also to explore the biography of Wesley, including the formative figures in his life; his life experiences bear directly on his educational theory and practice. For this reason, in this chapter, some characters of Wesley's time will be discussed, and a brief biographical sketch will be described, along with a description of the formative influences on Wesley's educational system.

Socio-Religio-Historical Context

The times were ripe for moral, spiritual, and social reform in eighteenth-century England. The reform was ignited by a religious movement launched by

Wesley. That movement, today known as Methodism, enabled a sizable number of England's working class to cope with the social and spiritual chaos of the Industrial Revolution. The traumatic transition from a medieval and agrarian culture to a modern and industrial one was eased for the urban masses by the contribution of Methodism. Thousands of laborers found personal meaning and a sense of salvation through this evangelical awakening. It has been also argued that Methodism spared England from the kind of bloody revolution which ravaged other nations on the continent.¹

Social life of the eighteenth-century England had its dark spots. England had become the great seafaring nation of Europe. The Peace of Utrecht, which ended the war of the Spanish Succession in 1713, gave her the monopoly of the slave trade.² Wealthy planters returned from the North American colonies to spend their money in their more congenial homeland, bringing with them Negroes and Indians whom they sold again. Even young poor Englishmen and women were sold to ships going overseas, after they had been lured into brothels. Alcohol and immorality wreaked their excesses in the villages, and frequently went along with sport and entertainment. The brutal tormenting of animals was the order of day.

¹ The Idea that Wesley's movement enabled England to avoid a violent revolution has been a popular theme. For this subject, see Elie Halevy, The Birth of Methodism in England, trans. and ed. Bernard Semmel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

sport and entertainment. The brutal tormenting of animals was the order of day. There were great economic and social inequalities, extremes of poverty and wealth existing side by side. A barbaric system of imprisonment of debtors put the law completely into the hands of the creditor and the holder of economic power. The helpless victims were frequently incarcerated in the same prisons with criminals.

With poetic expression, Wesley Tracy aptly describes the social context into which Wesley was born and lived as follows:

England was in the greedy grip of a whirlwind now called the Industrial Revolution. That whirlwind blew humanity into the cities like maple leaves before a November wind.³

In spite of such decadence, there was also a period of increasing prosperity among the powerful few. Whereas the vast majority of people were hungry and diseased, the few rich were eager to get more and more.⁴ Reacting against the rich and sympathizing with the poor, Wesley preached a sermon "On Riches." He asked his listeners to minister among the poor, and he demanded the rich to change their lives to share with the poor: "Go to now, ye rich men! Weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you in a few days unless prevented by a deep and

³ Wesley Tracy, "Christian Education in the Wesleyan Mode," Wesleyan Theological Journal 1 (1982): 32.

⁴ Robert G. Tuttle, Jr., John Wesley: His Life and Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 10.

entire change.”⁵ However, any attempt to bring the socio-economic-political justice was conceived as an unacceptable challenge. People tended to accept the ways which had been; furthermore, any attempt to bring a new idea of political system was condemned as dangerous.⁶ In such a problematic social context, religion (the Church of England) did not help people overcome their desperate life situation, and it did not envision their future with a biblical promise. The church had had little effect on the poor; rather, she seemed to be on the side of the middle-and-upper class which had expressed indifference to the social issue.⁷ For example, one rector drew an income from several livings, while the actual work was done by an ill-educated, underpaid, and half-starved curate. The rector kept in good relationship with the wealthy merchants who enabled him to enjoy relative domestic ease.⁸

Conditions were not of course everywhere the same. As always, the towns were worse than the villages; the villages, as communities in which it was natural

⁵ Wesley, Works, 3: 528.

⁶ Alfred H. Body, John Wesley and Education (London: Epworth Press, 1936), 18.

⁷ Whiteley, 295.

⁸ Tuttle, 35.

for people to grow up, formed a healthy barrier against the moral decay.⁹ The remarkable work of the Puritan preachers and writers in the field of moral training cannot have been without some effect. But the spirit of the age in the late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century was determined to a high degree by democratic movements in European politics, increasing influence of Enlightenment thinking, and a growing indifference to Christian moral standards, with more attention directed to pleasure. It is not, therefore, surprising that a movement for the revival of spiritual life emerged in the Church of England, influenced through religious societies.

By the beginning of the eighteenth-century, the appeal to faith was nearly abandoned altogether and reason prevailed. Deism was growing. It originated with Herbert of Cherbury in Cromwell's time.¹⁰ During the course of his frequent travels Herbert became familiar with other nations and religions, and so attacked the idea of Christianity as the criterion for judging worldviews and ethical action. In its place, he set up natural religion as the standard for belief and practice. Deism, for example, exalted reason to the point of obscuring supernatural and divine revelation. Reason was seen as the highest gift from God. Wesley illustrated how his contemporaries saw reason in relation to their religious

⁹ Schmidt, 1: 32.

¹⁰ Ibid., 29.

concern in the following way: “They look upon it [reason] as the all sufficient director of all children of men; able, by its native light, to guide them into all truth, and lead them into all virtue.”¹¹ Wesley felt that Matthew Tindal’s book, Christianity as Old as the Creation, was an assault on the honour of Christ, taking away Christ’s meaning as Saviour for salvation.¹²

The ecclesiastical scene was affected by the philosophical scene. Irreligion was now prevalent among the middle-and-upper-class society as well. In regard to such an irreligious scene, Wesley reminded people of the words written by Daniel Defoe: “No age since the founding and forming of the Christian church, was ever like, in open avowed atheism, blasphemies, and heresies, to the age we now live in.”¹³ The simple fact is that hardly anyone appeared to act by any principle of religion.

The established Anglican church was also highly political.¹⁴ Queen Anne (1702-1714), the younger daughter of James II, once again took a High Church line, which stressed the importance of the connection between the state and the

¹¹ Wesley, Works of John Wesley, 6: 351.

¹² Schmidt, 1: 115.

¹³ V. H. H. Green, John Wesley (New York: Saint Martins Press, 1961), 8. Cited by Tuttle, 35.

¹⁴ For the ecclesiastical background of the eighteenth century England, see Schmidt, 1: 16-34.

church. Church affairs were strongly influenced by events in the political sphere and actions of political authorities. Tensions within the Church were constantly made more acute by external events, such as a change in government.

On the other hand, there were serious weaknesses in the Church. The higher clergy frequently had an eye upon the Court, whose favor meant more to them than their own calling. Accordingly, their sermons often praised the prevailing system and the ruling persons; they were political speeches rather than messages of consolation or calls to repentance. Thus, the eighteenth-century Anglican church, in its ecclesiastical politics, catered to the political and social leaders of the country.

A full measure of misery, injustice, and oppression had given rise to people's readiness for the reform messages of John and Charles Wesley and the Methodist movement. The time was ripe for ecclesiastical revival and social reform. During the subsequent centuries, the evangelical revival and social reform initiated by the Wesleys has flourished and multiplied, reaching to most of the nations of the world with its organization and institution. The genius of the Wesleyan revival was as much educational and organizational as it was theological. Wesley's impact upon England and the world was largely due to his novel educational principles and practices. As the architect of a well-disciplined revival movement, he was able to assimilate a large population into various organizations whose purposes were

intellectual acquisition, behavioral change, spiritual growth, personal interaction, and community transformation.

Education in Wesley's Day

The attitude toward education in the time of John Wesley was bad. Only one child of twenty five attended any school.¹⁵ Poor parents were quite untroubled about their children's education since they looked upon their offspring as possible wage-earners. As J. H. Whiteley points out, wealthier parents looked upon infancy and adolescence as a kind mental, moral, and physical disease rendering the victims unfit occupants of a civilized home.¹⁶ Accordingly, to free themselves of the children's presence, they either employed menially-treated, badly paid tutors or sent them early to boarding-schools.¹⁷ School buildings were usually old, deficient in light and air, and gloomy. Wesley said the younger boys at Charterhouse were tyrannized, and the older ones were allowed to exercise the physical privilege of stealing food from the younger ones' plates.¹⁸ In practice, the condition of public schools was problematic and "discipline was so harsh that open rebellion by the

¹⁵ Tracy, 32.

¹⁶ J. H. Whiteley, Wesley's England: A Survey of XVIIIth Century Social and Cultural Conditions (London: Epworth Press, 1954), 268.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

students was not infrequent."¹⁹ Whipping with rods was generally conceived as an appropriate way of controlling students. According to Alfred Body, "John Wesley entered Charterhouse a saint and left it a sinner."²⁰ Some believe that these public schools were nurseries of vice and immorality. Whether or not this strong judgment is warranted, the public schools were riddled with problems.

Despite this evidence on eighteenth-century educational failures and shortcomings, there was genuine progress in education. Some philosophers, such as John Locke, John Milton, and Jean Jacques Rousseau, were making significant contributions to educational theory. Locke, among those, was the most influential; his conception of education was the underlying basis of much successful educational work in the century.²¹ Locke wrote Some Thoughts Concerning Education.²² In this book Locke bewailed the poor quality of some schoolmasters, and he grieved over the mixed herd of unruly boys. He stressed the importance of encouraging good company, making learning attractive, and banishing memory work. He believed in the almost unlimited power of education, and ascribed very

¹⁹ Body, 36.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 34.

²² John Locke, Some Thoughts Concerning Education, ed. Peter Gay (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964).

little importance to natural endowment. His educational plan was very influential, but it was also imperfect.²³ Wesley himself was deeply indebted to Locke.²⁴

John Milton's ideas on education, expressed in his Treatise on Education, was more liberal in conception, but his influence was more limited because of the difficulties in practice. Wesley agreed with Milton regarding the true aim of education. "The end of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright," says Milton.²⁵ "Education is to be considered as reason borrowed at second hand, which is as far as it can, to supply the loss of original perfection," says Wesley.²⁶

On the other hand, Jean Jacques Rousseau offered revolutionary ideas on education. In his Emile, Rousseau amazed his friends by stressing the dignity of parenthood; he astonished tutors by declaring that education should be approached from the learner's end, not from the teacher's. Importance was attached to sense-

²³ Body, 35.

²⁴ At this time, it is sufficient to state that curiously identical viewpoints and the parallel passages were often shared by both Wesley and Locke. The question, how much Wesley was really indebted to Locke for much of his educational theory and practice, will be discussed later.

²⁵ Body, 34.

²⁶ Wesley, "On the Education of Children," in Works, 3:348.

training and to realistic studies generally; an active part was assigned to the child in his or her own education. All of this was good, but the beneficence of Rousseau's theories was largely restricted to sensible tutors and dissenting academies. The famous schools either ignored the new doctrine completely, or made a farce of its implications. Wesley, for example, had very little patience with Rousseau because Rousseau's educational ideas laid no religious and moral teaching and discipline.²⁷

The children of the upper classes were not educated at public schools. Their education was often carried by tutors. Many private charity schools were founded by a humanitarian spirit for the children of the poor. However, we need to see a real hidden reason behind the foundation of these charity schools. In this respect, Alfred Body states:

Among the poorer classes the terrible lot of the children in bad parishes stirred the humanitarian spirit of the age, and the education of the poor was undertaken, not only from motives of pure philanthropy, but as an insurance against the dangers which the aristocracy saw arising from the vicious and unregulated products of the by-streets.²⁸

Having reflected and dialogued on education for more than ten years, Wesley made a five-fold indictment of the education of his day. Body summarizes the

²⁷ Wesley, "A Thought on the Manner of Educating Children," in Works of John Wesley, 13: 476.

²⁸ Body, 39.

indictment in the following sentences.²⁹ First, schools were badly situated. Most of them were in the great towns of England. Second, Wesley strongly objected to the promiscuous admission of all sorts of children into the schools. This tends to corrupt the other children. Third, instruction in religion was extremely defective. Specifically, Wesley criticized the heathen schoolmasters of his day, who were uninstructed in the very elements of religion and indifferent in the practice of it. Fourth, Wesley criticized the choices of subject matter in education. The basic subjects of writing and arithmetic were neglected to allow more time for the classics and for languages. Fifth, not only were the subjects ill-chosen, the methodological aspects of curriculum were often poorly planned.

As we can see, there is one main charge underlying all of these critiques; eighteenth-century British education reflected a profound lack of religion and religious motive. Into this socio-political-religio-educational context, Wesley came "stressing as antidotes for the diseases of the times--discipline, education, evangelism, religion, and love."³⁰ In his "A Short Account of the School in Kingswood, Near Bristol," Wesley expressed his educational goal as follows:

²⁹ Ibid., 45-47.

³⁰ Tracy, 32.

It is our particular desire, that all who are educated here may be brought up in the fear of God; and at the utmost distance, as from vice in general, so in particular from disease and effeminacy.³¹

This passage gives us a clue as to Wesley's chief educational idea: that religion and education must go hand in hand. He believed that the two enterprises, religion and education, were bound together in a mutual and dependent relationship. As to his zeal in education, Wesley wrote in his *Journal* on September 24, 1753: "I have spent more money, time, and care, on this [the foundation of Kingswood School], than almost any design I ever had."³²

Biographical Sketch

Dr. Martin Schmidt has produced a helpful sketch of Wesley's life which he entitled John Wesley: A Theological Biography.³³ In this theological approach to personal history, he recasts the progress of Wesley's life in terms of the formation of his theology. If there is justification for such a theological biography, which has been extremely useful in understanding Wesley's doctrinal position, then a theological biography is also helpful to understand Wesley's educational system since his educational theory and practice must have been shaped by his doctrinal

³¹ Wesley, "A Short Account of the School in Kingswood, Near Bristol," in Works of John Wesley, 13: 284.

³² Cited by Body, 44.

³³ See, John Wesley: A Theological Biography.

perspectives. Following Dr. Schmidt's precedent, this section will be a re-enactment of Wesley's development as an educational innovator, tracing the elements of his educational method to be influential factors in his ministry. Fortunately, Wesley was a person who kept a record of the authors he read, what he thought of them, and which of their ideas he could utilize. He also observed various group instruction, evaluated them, and left descriptive accounts of their adaptation into Methodism. What follows, then, is an attempt to thread together those factors into a chronological and biographical account.

Wesley's Home

Much of Wesley's success as an educator can be traced to factors in his own training at home. The principles of learning which were instilled by his parents eventually constituted the backbone of his own educational philosophy. In later years, when Wesley had the opportunity to instruct his people in their spiritual growth, he employed many of the same methods his parents had used.

His father Samuel Wesley was an Anglican clergyman and a biblical scholar of considerable renown. Brilliant and erudite, he instructed his children in the rudiments of liberal education and classical languages, so that the several of the children could read the Greek New Testament before the age of ten.³⁴ Charles

³⁴ John A. Newton, Susanna Wesley and the Puritan Tradition in Methodism (London: Epworth Press, 1968), 114.

Gildon, a contemporary of Samuel Wesley, described Samuel Wesley as follows:

He was a man of profound knowledge, not only of the Holy Scripture, of the councils, and of the Fathers, but also of every other art that comes within those called liberal. His zeal and ability in giving spiritual direction were great.³⁵

Such a breadth and intensity of knowledge must have been an inspiring and motivating factor to the youngsters in the Wesley home.

Despite Samuel's literary ability, he was poor in handling practical affairs, and he displayed an argumentative temperament. His mismanagement landed him in debtor's prison for at least a few months and in continual controversy throughout his life. No doubt, his lifetime assignment to the dismal village parish of Epworth in the fen country of Lincolnshire had something to do with his lack of tact. Even there, in that remote district, angry villagers twice burned his house and often stabbed his cattle in efforts to silence his outspoken opinions. Within his own house, the family also felt the repercussions of his volatile temper. Once, when his wife refused to say "Amen" to his prayer for the king, he demanded an explanation. After she explained that she would not acknowledge William of Orange to be the rightful heir to the throne, Samuel declared: "If that be the case, you and I must part; for if we have two kings, we must have two beds."³⁶ He

³⁵ Ibid., 78.

³⁶ Ibid., 87.

immediately departed for London, where he stayed several months. King William, the source of their disagreement, died that year (1702), and Samuel returned to Epworth. Less than a year later, in June of 1703, John Wesley was born, the child of their reconciliation.

John's mother Susanna Wesley was the daughter of a non-conformist minister. She has been recognized as the model of Puritan domestic management: disciplined, methodical, and graciously austere. John Newton offers a helpful biographical summary regarding Susanna.³⁷ She bore nineteen children, eight of them died in infancy. Her father was a prominent London pastor and close friend of the Puritan leader Richard Baxter. Despite her upbringing in this stronghold of Dissent, at age twelve she decided to become an Anglican.

One key tenet of Methodism is clearly evident in the educational philosophy of Susanna Wesley: the management of the human will. Mrs. Wesley considered the mastery of the child's will to be the decisive factor in character-molding. She was willing to postpone the instruction of the mind, since that process demanded time; but the subduing of the will must be done right away.

This emphasis on the subjection of the will came to the Wesley household largely through popular devotional writings. She was deeply impressed by the writings of the Catholic mystic Lorenzo Scupoli, the Puritan Richard Baxter, and

³⁷ See Newton, Susanna Wesley.

the Scottish Episcopalian Henry Scougal.³⁸ She gleaned from their spiritual writings practical suggestions for family discipline and the cultivation of inward piety.³⁹ She came to consider self-will as the root of all sin and misery, and so she taught her children that the essence of Christianity was doing God's will rather than their own. If self-will could not be conquered, she reasoned, then the child would never be free to accomplish constructive good.

In her explanation of the need for mastering the will of the child, she states as follows:

I insist upon conquering the will of children betimes, because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual. But when this is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason and piety of its parents, till its own understanding comes to maturity, and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind.⁴⁰

This emphasis on conquering the child's will and on personal discipline and spiritual submission became an essential component of John Wesley's educational system; he applied it to his people.

Another major theme in the Wesley home was the Puritan zeal for the care and

³⁸ Ibid., 136.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ John Wesley, The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, ed. Nehemiah Curnock (London; Epworth Press, 1938), 3: 36 (hereafter cited as Journal).

cure of souls. Following the example of Richard Baxter and other pastors, the Wesleys concentrated their energies on encouraging personal spiritual growth in themselves and others.⁴¹ Samuel pursued this theme in the cultivation of his parish; Susanna implemented it in her home. She shared the strong Puritan ideal of her father Dr. Annesley, who visualized the family as “a little gathered church, where prayer, Bible-reading, catechizing, and detailed personal instruction in the Christian faith provided a framework for the whole shared life of the home.”⁴² With Samuel’s assistance in language study, Susanna conducted a school for her children, giving them an excellent beginning in the rudiments of formal schooling.

In addition to her tutorial duties with her large family, she devoted an hour every week with each child to attend to his or her spiritual progress. She considered the nurture of each child’s religious life as a serious duty entrusted to her by God, and the highest calling an individual could receive. Each evening she took one or two children aside alone to discuss religious questions and to evaluate their spiritual improvement. These sessions were not formal and stuffy, but warm and intimate sharing concerning the reality of God and the greatness of God’s provision and the joys of the Christian life. John’s turn came on Thursdays. He welcomed each week’s inquiries provided by his mother. Years later, while he

⁴¹ Newton, 52.

⁴² Ibid., 53.

was a student at Oxford, he recalled these intimate times of spiritual conversation which he had shared with his mother.⁴³

Part of the genius of the Methodist movement was its concentration on the individual and his or her particular needs. Just as Susanna had tailored her spiritual instruction to the needs and interests of each child, so John and his associates individualized the tutoring of every person entrusted to their care.

Although John Wesley was the founder of Methodism, Susanna Wesley gave Methodism its methodical nature. She sought to bring every activity, word, thought, and motive into a well-regulated regimen. She passed on to her children the discipline of strict time management and orderly conduct. From infancy, each child was trained to live on a regular schedule. Eating, sleeping, studying, praying, and recreation each had an appointed time and place. Lessons were from nine o'clock to twelve in the morning, and from two to five in the evening with no interruptions. Family prayer was held at six p.m., followed by supper. At 7:00 the maid began to wash all the children so that by 8:00 all were in bed. Before the age of one year, each child was so disciplined that if he or she cry, he or she would cry softly.⁴⁴

⁴³ Ibid., 77.

⁴⁴ Anthony Armstrong, The Church of England, the Methodists, and Society, 1700-1850 (Totowa, N. J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), 56.

One of the most profound summaries of the disparate influences which converged in the Wesley home is that of Martin Schmidt, who describes as follows:

It [Wesley's household] brought together the heritage of Puritanism, Anglican churchmanship, and that concern for the care of souls, social activity and missionary zeal, derived from the revival of the Religious Societies. . .it drew its sustenance from Puritan culture of family life and from the nurture of individual souls found in Romantic mysticism. To this was joined the Halle type of pietism. Finally a place was given to liberal scholarship and the harmonious, mystical piety of a Henry Scougal was held in high esteem. To all this was added Susanna Wesley's personal gift as a teacher.⁴⁵

Thus, Wesley's learning environment was not at first the university classroom, but the kitchen hearth; his mentors were godly parents who viewed their offspring as sacred trusts.

Ordination and Holy Club

Wesley's formal schooling took place at Charter-house and Oxford. He received his bachelor's degree in 1724 at the age of 21 after five years of study. He demonstrated considerable proficiency in classical studies, but his greatest delight was logic and debate.⁴⁶

In 1724, the young Wesley made a decision which ultimately determine his

⁴⁵ Schmidt, 1: 63.

⁴⁶ John Telford, The Life of John Wesley (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1898), 33.

mission in life. His father encouraged him to seek ordination in the church of England and to dedicate his life to the priesthood. After this, the entire tone of his life took on a new seriousness. He recalls,

When I was about twenty-two, my father pressed me to enter into Holy Orders. At the same time, the providence of God directing me to Kempis' Christian Pattern, I began to see that true religion was seated in the heart and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as the words and actions.⁴⁷

Since that time, Wesley was eager to pay his primary attention to practical experiential divinity. Even in his later years, he maintained that the formative influences in his distinctive Christian lifestyle were found in four books: Thomas a Kempis' Imitation of Christ, Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living and Dying, and William Law's Christian Perfection and A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life.⁴⁸ Each of these authors outlined rigorous and detailed schemes of ascetic discipline geared to maximize Christian devotion. Wesley fashioned a schedule for himself based on the suggestions of these writers. On 19 September 1725, John Wesley was ordained deacon by John Porter, the Bishop of Oxford.⁴⁹

Wesley was called back to Oxford as a tutor in 1729. As Fellow of Lincoln

⁴⁷ Wesley, Works of John Wesley, 11: 366.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 366-67.

⁴⁹ Schmidt, 1: 90.

College, he had been appointed to supervise and tutor a group of undergraduates in both their academic and spiritual progress.⁵⁰ At that time, three undergraduates from different colleges had been meeting four nights weekly to study the classics and read the Greek New Testament. One of the members was Charles Wesley, John's younger brother. John quickly assumed leadership of the study group and gave it a more disciplined direction. The younger students gladly accepted John's suggestions for better ways to organize their time, so that the regimen of the group soon resembled John's own lifestyle. To classical studies and Bible reading were added regular periods of prayer, fasting, confession, and frequent partaking of the sacrament. In addition, the students seek opportunities for service and witness in the poor sections of the city. They visited the sick, elderly, and imprisoned and provided clothing and financial aid where they could. Their disciplined manner attracted the scorn of their fellow students, and they were dubbed "The Holy Club," "The Bible Moths," or "The Methodists," the latter name which Wesley's followers bear to this day.

Although the Oxford Holy Club drew considerable attention, it was not unique in eighteenth-century Anglican practice. A half-century earlier, Dr. Anton Horneck and others had originated the Religious Societies, voluntary associations

⁵⁰ Ibid., 96-97.

of young men for the pursuit of a distinctively Christian way of life.⁵¹

In the spiritual exercises of the Holy Club, Wesley's instructional technique was taking shape. Much like the Religious Societies' program, biblical principles were discussed and their implications examined in the context of a small group. Wesley added a new dimension; however, he demanded practical performance. In other words, the members of the Holy Club were encouraged to participate in a real-life experiment. Not content to be hearers only, they determined to be doers of the word. Thus, Wesley employed the interpersonal dynamics of an intimate group to facilitate behavioral change.

Georgia Mission

In 1735 Wesley accepted the chaplaincy of General Oglethorpe's colony in Georgia. The original plan entailed missionary work among the Indians, but this was soon abandoned, and Wesley became pastor of the English churches at Savannah and Frederica.

During his thirty-month stay in the new world, he was able to try out his group learning model, fashioned after the Holy Club, on an entirely different population. Wesley soon had the entire congregations divided into smaller groups. These met regularly for exhortation, instruction, and correction. From these initial groups,

⁵¹ For an analysis of the influence of the Religious Societies on Wesley's groups, see John S. Simon, John Wesley and the Religious Societies (London: Epworth Press, 1921).

Wesley chose a small number of faithful men which he met with on Sunday afternoons for more intensive training.

One of the most valuable outcomes of the George experiment was that Wesley's group instruction underwent considerable improvement. He demonstrated that the pattern established in the Holy Club was transferable to other environments, with some modification. While Wesley was in America, he encountered two other forces which would significantly influence his formation of theological and educational thoughts and practices. Wesley renewed his acquaintance with an earlier group innovator, Mr. de Renty, and he was introduced to the Moravians.

De Renty (1611-1649) had been strongly influenced by Thomas a Kempis' Imitation of Christ. De Renty had experienced a transforming awareness of the presence of Christ which led him to dedicate his whole life to caring for the poor and encouraging his countrymen to a devout and holy life.⁵² These emphases certainly made de Renty an appealing model for Wesley, but what attracted him most was de Renty's method: small, intensely personal, and highly effective groups.

John Wesley became aquatinted with de Renty's work through his father. Later, when Wesley was going to Georgia aboard the Simmonds, he read de

⁵² Schmidt, 1: 213-17.

Renty's biography and found encouragement in the techniques he had utilized in his own ministry. Throughout his life, Wesley continued to refer to de Renty as the epitome of Christian holiness coupled with concern for the poor and effective methodology. In his "Further Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," written to Roman Catholic, Wesley wrote: "O that you would follow that burning and shining light of your own church, the Marquis de Renty!"⁵³

Although there were similarities between the Religious Societies and de Renty's societies, there were also important distinctions.⁵⁴ The focus of the Anglican groups was personal growth through self-reflection, while de Renty concentrated on personal growth through ministering to others' needs. The Anglican hoped that Christian service would be the eventual outcome of their quest for personal holiness, while de Renty viewed Christian service as the context in which personal holiness developed. Wesley gravitated toward the latter emphasis. Wesley recognized that preoccupation with one's personal spirituality could easily lead to that self-centeredness from which they were trying to escape. For Wesley, de Renty's model of growth-through-service enabled him to steer his people around the dangers of morbid introspection and mysticism.

⁵³ Wesley, Works, 8: 46.

⁵⁴ Schmidt, 1: 191-92.

The Church of the Brethren was a sect of German pietists who had been exiled from their ancestral home in the seventeenth century. Because they were aliens and exiles, they were commonly known by nationality, rather than by their church affiliation, as “the Moravians.”⁵⁵ They traced their spiritual ancestry back to Wycliff and Huss in Bohemia, who were pre-Reformation evangelical preachers and reformers.

During the seventeenth-century, the pietists reacted to the cold and formal Lutheranism of Germany and sought to return to warm piety and devout simplicity of primitive Christianity, hence their name “Pietists.”⁵⁶ Their emphasis was upon personal character and charitable works, and they showed little interest in, or sympathy for, systematic theology and classical learning. In their request for personal fulfillment and Christian discipline, they made several innovations in group instruction and interaction.

The first major leader of the Pietists was Philipp Jakob Spener, a Lutheran pastor at Frankfurt, who had been deeply influenced by the writings of Richard Baxter and other English Puritans.⁵⁷ Spener established home study for the pursuit

⁵⁵ Albert C. Outler, ed., John Wesley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 353.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Clifford W. Towlson, Moravian and Methodist (London: Epworth Press, 1957), 17-18.

of serious Christianity. These groups were gradually merged into the church itself. They were discussion groups centered around the study of devotional books or the catechism

Spener's successor was August Hermann Franke, a pastor who later became professor of theology at the University of Halle. He combined Spener's emphasis on small groups with practical charity, forming orphan homes, charity schools, and a publishing company.⁵⁸

Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf was a German nobleman who opened his estate to the exiled Moravians and became their spiritual leader. He had been reared under the influence of Spener and Franke and owed much to his pietistic upbringing.⁵⁹ General Oglethorpe, founder of the Georgia Colony in America, offered land in America to the exiled Moravians.⁶⁰ The first group of twenty-six sailed for Georgia aboard the Simmonds, along with John Wesley.⁶¹

John Wesley was immediately attracted to the Moravians. Their simple lifestyle, sincere faith, and untiring service to the passengers reminded him of the

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Schmidt, 1: 180.

⁶¹ Ibid., 136.

first-century Christians. About ten days from its arrival in Georgia, the Simmonds encountered a severe storm which nearly took the ship and her passengers to the bottom of the Atlantic. In the midst of the storm, Wesley developed a profound respect for these Moravians.⁶² This storm at sea was an unsettling experience for Wesley. The depth of the Moravians' faith evoked Wesley's admiration. He recognized that these unknown Moravians had a quality which was essential to Christianity. He had studied theology and biblical literature in the original languages, given himself in charity and service, devoted his life to sincere spiritual discipline, and yet had failed to find that simple faith which sustained the Moravians in their time of crisis. He was forced to admit their spiritual superiority and to accept the role of a humble learner.

The Moravians believed in another idea, which was intimidating to Wesley: that individuals were granted salvation by God instantaneously. Pastor Spangenburg, leader of the Georgia Moravians, asked Wesley directly if he was sure of his salvation, and Wesley fumbled for an appropriate answer. He was embarrassed to admit that he had no such assurance.

One practice which Wesley picked up from the Moravians almost led to his undoing, and certainly was a precipitating factor in his expulsion from the Georgia colony. The Moravians believed in determining God's will in difficult or unclear

⁶² Wesley, Journal, 1: 141-43.

situations by casting lots. Wesley applied this practice to the momentous choice whether or not to marry Sophey Hopkey.⁶³ She was a very acceptable candidate for marriage, and he was very fond of Miss Hopkey; however, the lot cast was against marriage. Wesley was swept up in a confusion of reason, emotions, and the outcome of the lot.

Defeated and disillusioned, he returned to England. He entered a period of restless discontent. In his crisis of self-esteem, he turned again to the Moravians; this time to one of their pastors in London, Peter Bohler.

Conversion

The influence of the Moravians, through the agency of Peter Bohler, finally led John Wesley to the heart of the Methodist phenomenon: the experience of personal conversion. In the midst of crisis, Wesley was counseled and encouraged by Bohler. Bohler urged Wesley to open himself to experience God's saving grace. Hence, Wesley made a thorough examination of the accounts of conversions in the New Testament and interviewed a number of people who experienced a radical spiritual transformation. Wesley now became convinced that this faith was a gift from God, and that God would surely bestow it upon every person who earnestly sought it.

⁶³ Schmidt, 1: 195-204.

After weeks of restless searching, Wesley finally found the experience he sought at a Moravian group meeting on Aldersgate street in London. After the meeting, he wrote in his journal:

In the evening I went very unwilling to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.⁶⁴

The overwhelming awareness of God's grace was finally real to Wesley. Scholars have scrutinized whether this transformation was a conversion experience, and whether it was instantaneous or part of a gradual transformation. The critical issue is that it was a powerful, life-changing experience of God's grace in John Wesley's life.

Such experiences have significant implications for religious education. Often a dramatic conversion experience is the point of entry, the rite of passage, by which an individual becomes part of a distinct educational process. Methodism was to be first of all, in Wesley's favorite term, "heart-felt religion," not merely correct theology, proper conduct or humanitarian service. From the very beginning of Methodism, the aims and methods of Methodism were shaped by this experiential

⁶⁴ Wesley, Journal, 1: 475-76.

focus. Like Luther, Wesley sharply distinguished religion built around moral conduct from religion based on faith. Thus, the experience of God's grace became the primary focus upon which the Wesleyan educational system would be built.

The Herrnhut Model

After having experienced the warming of his heart through God's saving grace, Wesley set out to visit the Moravian settlements in Europe. At the settlement of Herrnhut and Jena, Wesley observed the Moravian schools patterned by Amos Comenius with great fascination.⁶⁵ There he also found that the Moravian leader Count Zinzendorf had arranged the community into compact cells, or "bands" as he called them, for spiritual oversight and community administration. Wesley especially appreciated the Moravian emphasis on personal character and charitable community involvement. He saw the Moravians as simple, uncomplicated people, avoiding theological and classical learning in favor of personal and devotional growth. Their methodology was geared to promote collective interaction rather than individual achievement.

⁶⁵ Wesley was greatly influenced by the educational principles operated in the Moravian schools as he applied them in his own schools, especially the Foundery School and the Kingswood School. See Wesley, Works of John Wesley, 13: 294. Amos Comenius' influence upon Wesley's education system will be discussed in the later chapter.

In a letter to the Moravians at Herrnhut, Wesley commended their organizational plan and care of individuals:

I greatly approve of your conferences and bands; of your method of instructing children; and, in general, of your great care of the souls committed to your charge.⁶⁶

The Moravians practiced an educational distinction which was to become one of the hallmarks of Wesleyan educational system: the separation of instruction from edification as two distinct functions. There were instructional sessions at Herrnhut called “choirs,” which were entirely given to teaching. On the other hand, the bands were for intimate sharing, confessions, and personal reporting of spiritual experience.

Another contribution which Moravianism made to Wesleyan educational system was the involvement of women in the service of educational ministry in the church and family as well. As Wesley analyzed the Herrnhut model, which mobilized the entire Christian community for instruction and service, he recognized the value of including women in the educational system. Nehemiah Curnock, editor of Wesley’s journal, comments in a footnote to Wesley’s Herrnhut observations:

No doubt Wesley learnt much at Herrnhut with reference to the employment of women in the church. We may trace to his friendship with the Moravians much of the early Methodist

⁶⁶ Wesley, Journal, 2: 496.

appreciation of women's gift for service amongst their sisters, and especially amongst the children.⁶⁷

The Moravians also provided Wesley with the conceptual basis for organizational renewal within the Church of England. This was known among the pietists as *ecclesiolae in ecclesia*.⁶⁸ In this approach, Wesley recognized a means to bring new life to the stagnant structure of the Church of England. Wesley returned to England with zeal for his new-found techniques, eager to try them out on religious seeker in the London area.

Despite his enthusiasm for the methodological and organizational innovations he had borrowed from the Moravians, Wesley had begun to have some serious doubts of their doctrines and practices. The following letter to his brother Charles illustrates those Moravians practices and beliefs that Wesley disliked:

As yet I dare in no wise join with the Moravians: (1) Because their general scheme is mystical, not scriptural; refined in every point above what is written, immeasurably beyond the plain gospel. (2) Because there is darkness and closeness in all their behavior, and guile in almost all their words. (3) Because they not only do not practice, but utterly despise and decry, self-denial and the daily cross. (4) Because they conform to the world, in wearing gold and gay or costly apparel. (5) Because they are by no means zealous of good works, or at least only to their own people. For these reasons I will rather, God being my helper, stand quite alone than join with

⁶⁷ Ibid., 25.

⁶⁸ Towlson, 18.

them; I mean till I have full assurance that they are better acquainted with ‘the truth as it is in Jesus.’⁶⁹

Wesley’s acknowledged debt of gratitude to the Moravians made this controversy a painful one. He stood by his doctrinal principles, however, and broke completely with his spiritual and educational mentors.⁷⁰

The Fetter Lane Society

One of the most significant educational experiments undertaken by Wesley was the Fetter Lane Society. This gathering of forty or fifty people met for prayer and group instruction on Wednesday nights in London, beginning on May 1, 1738.⁷¹ It was formed as an updated Religious Society associated with the Church of England, but it was altered in form and method by innovations borrowed from the Moravians. Wesley shared the leadership with Moravian leader Peter Bohler.

As the new society began to take shape, it was quite different from Wesley’s earlier models in several respects. In this new society, there was no rule which confined membership to those who belonged to the Church of England.⁷² This was, in its day, a radical departure from established custom. In fact, it was actually

⁶⁹ Wesley, Journal, 2: 448-49.

⁷⁰ Outler, John Wesley, 353.

⁷¹ Wesley, Journal, 1: 198.

⁷² Towlson, 188.

against the law in England for such interdenominational religious groups to meet at all. This illegality would become a threat to the group's existence.

The Fetter Lane Society brought together the strengths of both the Anglican Religious Societies and the Moravian bands. The Religious Societies were particularly well-designed for effective cognitive instruction, especially the acquisition of religious beliefs for personal application.⁷³ The Moravian bands established an optimum environment for the development of personal devotion and the cultivation of a radical lifestyle. The entire society was to meet at 8:00 on Wednesday evenings in a large room for instruction and spiritual inspiration.⁷⁴ The professional leaders, such as Wesley, Bohler, or a visiting speaker, stuck closely to the lecture format. Group discussion was not encouraged. The only response the participants made may have been affirmative nods and occasional "amen."

In addition to the Wednesday session of the society, Wesley organized bands of five to ten people of the same sex to meet twice weekly.⁷⁵ Their purpose was to provide an environment in which intimate interaction could be fostered to facilitate personal spiritual growth. In these bands, lay leaders appointed by Wesley and

⁷³ Simon, 296.

⁷⁴ Towlson, 188.

⁷⁵ Simon, 296.

Bohler directed the flow of conversation by a set of predetermined questions. As each member spoke in turn and reported the state of his or her religious life, the rest of the group was to respond in terms of encouragement, affirmation, suggestions, and support. By doing this, the total participation was attained in two ways: (1) each person stated his or her own spiritual condition at every meeting, and (2) every listener was expected to give verbal or non-verbal response to every member as he or she spoke. Thus, in operating the Fetter Lane Society, Wesley was able to combine the strengths of both instructional and interactive modes.⁷⁶

The use of unordained laymen as band leaders was a shocking innovation to Anglican culture.⁷⁷ It soon provoked waves of criticism from both the established clergy and the general public.

For the next two years, John Wesley's base of ministry was the Fetter Lane Society. It was an admixture of various group—Anglican, Moravian, and those who were influenced by French mystics. Wesley dealt privately and individually with those whose behavior threatened to disrupt the cohesion of the fellowship. As his renown as an evangelical preacher spread, however, his speaking engagement

⁷⁶ For a study on distinctive instructional functions of society and band within the Fetter Lane Society, see David Michael Henderson, John Wesley's Instructional Groups, Ph.D. Diss., Indiana University, 1980 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1980), 74-75.

⁷⁷ For a study on Wesley's use of lay leaders, see Towlson, 105-37.

led him farther and farther afield. Finally, in July of 1740, Wesley terminated his relationship with the society due to a conflict over quietism or “stillness,” that was to abstain from the means of grace, the Lord Supper in particular.⁷⁸ At the same time, some radical changes were about to take place in his life which would give him the opportunity to exercise his public ministry.

Outdoor Preaching

Although outdoor preaching is hardly unconventional from the perspective of the twentieth-century, it contrasted sharply with the religious practice of Wesley’s day. In Wesley’s day, religion had become so domesticated that only regularly ordained clergy, using approved liturgy, could conduct routine services within territory they were assigned. Religion was as dry as dust, and what services were performed were largely for the rich. The poor and illiterate were nearly beyond the reach of the established church.⁷⁹ In this context, the clergy were alarmed and the lower classes delighted when Wesley and his colleagues took their preaching to the open field.

It was not Wesley, however, but George Whitefield, one of Wesley’s pupils,

⁷⁸ Tuttle, 274.

⁷⁹ For a general explanation of ecclesiastical background of the eighteenth-century of British, see Stanley Aying, John Wesley (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979), 11-13; Martin Schmdit, John Wesley, I: 16-34.

who inaugurated and popularized the outdoor preaching.⁸⁰ George Whitefield had been a younger colleague of Wesley at Oxford and an early leader in the Holy Club; later he was associated with the Fetter Lane Society. After an intense and prolonged period of searching, Whitefield experienced the born-again phenomenon. With dramatic and powerful preaching, Whitefield captivated large crowds in church services in London.

Taking his preaching and fund-raising campaign to the poor in Bristol, Whitefield was disillusioned to find the churches of the city closed to him. Soon he was ready to launch his evangelical campaign through mass outdoor preaching. Now his outdoor preaching was succeeded by Wesley. Whitefield initiated and popularized mass evangelism to the unchurched, but Wesley organized the evangelical movement and brought it under systematic organizational management. Wesley made sure that those who were serious about leading a new life were channeled into effective instructional and nurturing groups. He reformed the Religious Societies in Bristol.

Wesley's choice of the common working people as his target audience dictated some of the criteria by which his educational system would be shaped. Wesley

⁸⁰ For a study of the life and work of George Whitefield, see John Charles Pollock, George Whitefield and the Great Awakening (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1972); Arnold A. Dallimore, George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival, vol. 1 (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1970).

sought to speak "plain truth for plain people."⁸¹ His language would be concrete rather than abstract. His appeal would be almost entirely based on scripture rather than the accumulated thoughts of the learned men and women. His educational system would be geared to elicit behavioral response rather than intellectual dialogue. Taking his message to the ordinary working people in Bristol through the outdoor preaching necessitated an different educational method than had worked at Oxford.

The Foundery Society

Wesley's educational system reached its final stage of development with the establishment of the Foundery Society in December of 1739.⁸² During a three-year organizational period, several new features were added to the Wesleyan format of religious education, but once that pattern was established, it remained largely unchanged during the remaining fifty years of Wesley's ministry.

Later in the year of 1739, as Wesley was preaching in an open meadow called Moorefields, he was approached by two businessmen with the offer of a nearby facility; he bought and rebuilt it.⁸³ By June 1740, the building was remodeled enough to accommodate sizable audience as well as to provide housing for his

⁸¹ Wesley, Works of John Wesley, 4: 1.

⁸² Schmidt, 1: 157.

⁸³ Wesley, Works of John Wesley, 8: 296-97.

students and evangelists. When the building was ready, over 300 members were meeting regularly as The Foundery Society. Later it became the "United Society," Wesley's name for the new venture.

The new building was a new beginning for Wesley. He now had his own building and a school, a society of his own making.⁸⁴ It contained elements of all that he had experienced before. In addition to the establishment of a society for instruction and bands for edification, Wesley made some other important modifications. In order to open the membership to a wider target population, the only requirement for admission to the new society was a desire to be freed from the wrath of judgment and to be saved from sins. The Bible lessons were a new feature.

By June of 1741, the Foundery Society had grown to 900 members, and Wesley's ministry in Bristol and Kingswood was growing steadily. Accordingly, new societies were being established in these areas. The bands were not increasing in number as rapidly as the societies, so that Wesley began to organize the well-known class-meeting. In regard to the new adventure of launching the class-meeting, Wesley states:

It is the business of a leader (1) To see each person in his class, once a week at the least, in order to inquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require; too

⁸⁴ Wesley's educational principles and practices performed in his school will be discussed in the later chapter.

receive what they are willing to give toward the relief of the poor. (2) To meet with the Minister and the Stewards of the Society, in order to inform the Minister of any that are sick, or of any that are disorderly and will not be reproved; to pay to the Stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding.⁸⁵

The class-meeting filled the critical gap between the society and band. It was soon the most prominent and unique feature of early Methodism and was copied by other religious groups as well as by political, commercial, and educational organizations.⁸⁶ The Foundery Society was looked upon as the mother-church of Methodism. Whenever people responded to the new life offered in Wesley's evangelical message, they were gathered into an organization following the Foundery Society pattern. Wesley's educational methodology in a group setting continued to go through minor alternations, but the pattern remained basically unchanged throughout his lifetime. Thus, with the establishment of societies, classes, and bands, Wesley provided new believers with a unique educational process of association and involvement, which included conversion, Christian nurture, and pastoral care.

From the organization of the first society until the day of his death, Wesley maintained his role as the leader of this movement. Finally, a legal corporation

⁸⁵ Wesley, Works of John Wesley, 8: 252-53.

⁸⁶ Henderson, 101.

called “The Conference of the People Called Methodists” was constituted by a hundred men chosen by Wesley.⁸⁷ This conference was designed to govern and guide the societies as Wesley had done, and to continue them within the Church of England.

In sum, in an age of searching for spiritual and moral reform, John Wesley dedicated his whole life to proclaiming the power of God’s grace and the urgency of holy living. This led him to preach, to organize and lead a movement, and to engage in teaching and nurture through societies, classes, bands, and schools. The ultimate success of his revival movement required ongoing processes and institutions to provide the nurture through which persons were shaped into Christians. The goal of Christian life, for Wesley, was to achieve holiness, or the consecration of one’s whole self to God and neighbor in love. Such fullness of faith and love is itself initiated by God’s grace. It is not a state, but a dynamic process toward Christian perfection: saving faith is its beginning; entire sanctification is its proper climax. This process includes corporate intellectual discipline and spiritual nurture as well.

No summary review of Wesley’s biography can convey an adequate sense of his life and thought. The following chapter will explore his theological anthropology and its appropriation into the educational theory and practices which

⁸⁷ Wesley, Journal, 8: 335-41.

had been employed in revivalism, aiming toward the fullness of humanity as experienced in total commitment to love God and neighbor.

Chapter 6

Wesley's Understanding of Humanity

Wesley's views of religious education grew naturally from his theology, especially, his distinctive doctrines of anthropology and soteriology.¹ As we have observed in the previous chapter, Wesley's theology was influenced by various traditions, such as the Anglican church tradition, Puritanism, German Pietism, the early church fathers and Eastern Orthodoxy. Briefly speaking, from Anglican and Roman Catholic traditions, he learned the Christian emphasis on holy living; from the traditions of German pietism and Reformation theology, the doctrine of "faith alone"; and from the tradition of early church fathers and Eastern Orthodoxy, the idea of holiness.² By extensive reading in many sources, contemplative reflecting upon them, and practicing Christian life, Wesley tried to integrate Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason in formulating his theology, or what he called practical divinity.

¹ In the preface to his first volume of Sermon on Several Occasions (1746), Wesley outlined his plan to provide his readers with "those doctrines [anthropology and soteriology]... which I embrace and teach as the essentials of true religion." Cited by Richard P. Heitzenrater's Forward to Albert C. Outler, John Wesley's Sermons: An Introduction (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 9.

² Thomas A. Langford, Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 11-23.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to examine Wesley's view of human nature, along with his doctrine of salvation. He described human life in three stages: the original perfection of the imago dei, the fall of that image, and the mystery of grace and promise of the image's restoration.³

Human Life as Created in the Image of God

The biblical metaphor of the imago dei is central to Wesley's ideas about humanity; it appears throughout his sermons from his early to late period. For Wesley, the image of God is related to the human soul: since God is invisible Spirit, God's image is applicable only to the soul which is invisible spirit. The human body is corporal, and it is not allowed to share the divine nature of the image of God, who is not corporal. Wesley gave a theological account of the image of God under three categories—the natural, moral, and political images.

The Image of God

In his sermon "The Image of God," Wesley described what he understood as a Christian biblical anthropology. Wesley's biblical anthropology begins with the statement: "Man was originally made in the image of God."⁴ He further described the image of God with three aspects: the *natural image* of God, which is immortality and includes rationality, emotion, and will; the *political image* of God,

³ Wesley, "The Image of God," in Sermons, 14-21.

⁴ Wesley, "The Image of God," in Sermons, 15.

which is the governor of the lower world; and, the *moral image* of God, which is "righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24).⁵

Human beings are given chiefly the *natural image*. In this image of God, human beings are given an "unerring understanding" to see reality justly and clearly; they are also given an "uncorrupt will" to love the Creator and one's neighbor, and "perfect freedom" to make oneself as "the sole lord and sovereign judge of one's own actions."⁶ Wesley said, "The result of these—an unerring understanding, an uncorrupt will, and perfect freedom—gave the last stroke to the image of God in man, by crowning all these with happiness."⁷ Wesley particularly emphasized the free will of human beings. In his sermon "On What Is Man," Wesley describes free will as follows:

A distinctive property of the soul; capable of being exerted with regard to all the faculties of the soul as well as the motions of the body. It [free will] is a power of self determination; which although it does not extend to all our thoughts and imagination, yet extends to our words and actions in general, and not with many exceptions. . . . To deny this would be to deny the constant experience of all human kind.⁸

For Wesley, free will was seen as a human faculty for expressing emotions, and for

⁵ Wesley, "The New Birth," in Sermons, 336-45.

⁶ Wesley, "The Image of God," in Sermons, 15-16.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁸ Wesley, "What is Man?" in Works, 4: 24.

choosing one's thoughts, words, and behaviors. It is a power of self-determination, by which human beings are called to full humanity. Adam and Eve were created in the supreme perfection of humanity, and Wesley described the perfection of their humanity in terms of their perfect exercising of the triple faculty of the natural image.

The Purpose of God's Creation of Humanity

Why did God create the first humanity in God's image in such a perfect condition? In Wesley's reply to this question his ideas about the purpose of God's creation of humanity, or the goal of human existence in this life, are noted.

When God created humanity God designed it to live in eternity by endowing it with immortality, which is the image of God. God graciously pleased to make humanity partaker of eternity.⁹ Since humanity is endowed with the natural image of Divine Eternity, Wesley affirmed, it must not betray God's original design.¹⁰ Thus, according to Wesley, dying was not God's purpose in creating humanity; the first humans were supposed to be like the angels with boundless duration of life.

The purposes of God's creation of humanity constantly recurs in Wesley's sermon "What is Man?" In this sermon, the goal of human existence was clearly

⁹ Wesley, "The Image of God," in Sermons, 15.

¹⁰ Ibid.

shown in Wesley's reply to the question of why God created humanity in a perfect condition: "Having prepared all things for him, He 'created man in his own image, after his own likeness.' And what was the end of his creation? It was one, and no other—that he might know, and love, and enjoy, and serve his great Creator to all eternity."¹¹

To glorify God, according to Wesley, is another purpose for which God created humanity in Eden. In his sermon, "Sermon on the Mount, VI," when Wesley interpreted the Lord's Prayer, he understood the phrase, "And the Glory," as "the praise due from every creature" for God's power and wondrous works without end.¹² Wesley, thus, believed that throughout human history, from the beginning to the end, humanity is required by God to give glory to God the Creator of nature and all creatures.

Wesley affirmed that happiness is the final purpose of God's creation of humanity. For instance, Wesley said that Adam was endowed with the will not for any other purposes than to love God, and when God required of Adam to love God, it was not because God was in need of it, but because it was the one thing needful to perfect God's creature's "happiness."¹³ When human faculties of the

¹¹ Wesley, "What is Man?" in Works 4: 25.

¹² Wesley, "Sermon on the Mount VI," in Sermons, 235.

¹³ Wesley, "The Love of God," in Works 4: 331.

natural image were exercised to love God perfectly, its fruit was happiness: the first humanity was crowned with happiness by loving God.

Sin

The first humans who were created in the image of God were “a little lower than the angels,” but their nature was perfect, angelic, divine. Nevertheless, despite this angelic condition in which the first humans were, they fell into evil, lost their perfect state, and were corrupted. How, then, was it possible that this wise, virtuous, free humanity was deprived of its perfect nature?

God-given free will, which makes human beings distinctively human, made it possible for them to disobey God, the Creator’s sole command not to eat the fruit of tree of good and evil. Disobedience brought the first human beings to separation from God, which is called "sin." As a result of abusing God-given free will, wise, virtuous and happy creatures turned into beings who had to suffer from death, sickness, and vice. Accordingly, since the fall of Adam, human beings were corrupted entirely; they lost the image of God, which was their original nature. When Wesley looked at his country, he concluded that the fundamental problem was human sinfulness.

In his Notes Upon the New Testament, Wesley affirmed the universality of sin

in relation to human nature, tempers, and action.¹⁴ No part of human existence escapes the contamination. By taking references from the biblical passages, Wesley affirmed the universality of the sinful nature of humanity as follows:

. . . by one man's disobedience all men were constituted sinners; that in Adam all died, spiritually died, lost the life and the image of God; that fallen, sinful Adam then begets a son in his likeness; nor was it possible he should beget him in any other, for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? That consequently we, as well as other men, were by nature dead in trespasses and sins, without hope, without God in the world, and therefore children of wrath.¹⁵

If we are to understand Wesley's doctrine of humanity, we first recognize Wesley's firm belief in the depth and tragedy of human sinfulness; people have abused their God—given free will.

What, then, is sin? Wesley spoke of sin in relational terms. His classic definition is that sin is “every voluntary breach of the law of love.”¹⁶ At its base, sin is a broken relationship, whether that brokenness is expressed toward God or others, or non-human beings. Wesley himself focused on the breach as conscious and willful. Wesley's definition of sin also involves a cause and effect relationship. The cause is willful transgression, the result is sickness. The disease

¹⁴ Wesley, Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1966), 530.

¹⁵ Wesley, “Original Sin,” in Sermons, 326-27.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 322.

of sin has “spread itself over the whole man, leaving no part uninfected.”¹⁷ This means that sin goes deeper than any acts we commit. The Bible does not say that we are sinners because we commit acts of sin; rather, it says that we commit acts of sin because we are sinners. Sin has struck at the root of what it means to be human.

Wesley believed that Adam was in a perfect condition before the Fall. He bore the image of God completely as God had intended it to be borne, but in the Fall the image of God was radically damaged. The moral aspects of the image were totally lost.¹⁸ Although the natural aspects of image were extremely corrupted, it was not completely destroyed. Humanity retained some degree of rationality, emotion, and will. In this context, however, human beings are unable to come to God by their own faculties. Intimacy between God and human beings is disrupted; separation results, along with spiritual sickness.

This kind of thinking is not popular today. Rather, some of us today deny “the objective reality of sin altogether.”¹⁹ Others try to paint the existential reality of

¹⁷ Wesley, Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament, 540.

¹⁸ As noted early, Wesley included righteousness and true holiness in his understanding of the “moral image.”

¹⁹ Steve Harper, John Wesley’s Message for Today (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 30.

human sinfulness with understated phrases such as “the absence of goodness,” “mistake,” or “nobody’s perfect.”²⁰ This tendency was also true in Wesley’s time, as Wesley states in his sermon “Original Sin”: “It is now quite unfashionable to say anything to the disparagement of human nature.”²¹ Ironically, this sermon was based not on the story of the fall of Adam, but on the story of Noah, and the text is Genesis 6:5: “The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually” (New Revised Standard Version). Wesley’s basic intention was to tell the truth that “our natural condition today is unchanged from that described in the text.”²² Therefore, we need to reaffirm the reality and danger of sin, not from the standpoint of pessimism, but from the perspective of realism.

Wesley spoke of some effects of sin. He spoke of the Fall having brought death to the soul.²³ The dead soul gives a false sense of security and peace. Wesley puts it this way: “The poor unawakened sinner has no knowledge of himself. . . . He knows not that he is a fallen spirit. . . . Full of diseases as he is, he

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Wesley, “Original Sin,” in Sermons, 326.

²² John B. Cobb, Jr., Grace and Responsibility: A Wesleyan Theology Today (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 80.

²³ Wesley, “Justification by Faith,” in Sermons, 113.

fancies himself in perfect health.”²⁴ Wesley compared spiritual death to the branches that spring out of an evil root. The branches produce the fruit of unbelief, independence, pride, vanity, ambition, covetousness, lust, anger, envy, and sorrow.²⁵

Another effect of sin is self-captivity. This is the logical consequence of being dead to God. If one is truly dead to God, then the only alternative is to turn to oneself and make oneself as a god. On this subject, Wesley said, “From the same ignorance of himself and God there may sometimes arise in the natural man a kind of joy in congratulating himself upon his own wisdom and goodness.”²⁶

Finally, a third effect of sin is the inability of humans to restore their original nature endowed in the image of God. Even though Wesley did not accept the total destruction of the image of God, he did believe it had been rendered powerless to revitalize itself. Even a person under conviction was in need of grace to find victory. Wesley described this dilemma by saying:

Now he truly desires to break loose from sin and begins to struggle with it. But though he strives with all his might, he cannot conquer; sin is mightier than he.²⁷

²⁴ Wesley, “Awake, Thou That Sleepest,” in Sermons, 86.

²⁵ Wesley, “The Way to the Kingdom,” in Sermons, 128-29.

²⁶ Wesley, “The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption,” in Sermons, 136.

²⁷ Ibid., 138.

What are the implications of a strong doctrine of sin? If we realize the reality and danger of sin, and if we know that we cannot save ourselves, then we need to be saved; we need a savior. This is what Wesley wanted people to acknowledge. John Cobb emphasizes this point: ‘‘For Wesley the whole account of the way of salvation made no sense without the assumption that human beings are in fundamental need of salvation.’’²⁸ At this point, it must be noted that Wesley never spoke of the nature of sin or its effects without mentioning the remedy. Help is available for the helpless. Cure is available for the disease.

Wesley believed that love is expressed in the midst of human sin. Fortunately, sinful humans are not left alone because God’s love is stronger than the power of sin. Wesley’s theology of God’s love was based on two primary considerations. First, Wesley believed that God loves human beings as the supreme object of God’s creation. Second, Wesley firmly believed in the original righteousness of human beings because the first humans were endowed with the moral image. A belief in original righteousness gave Wesley his primary reason to believe in God’s love. Within the context of sin, love is offered. God’s salvific love is a response

²⁸ Cobb, 79.

to the existential reality of sin. Wesley said it himself, “We know no gospel without salvation from sin.”²⁹

Order of Salvation

Wesley believed that original humanity can and must be restored. He firmly argued that there is “one thing now needful” for fallen human beings, that is, “to reexchange the image of Satan for the image of God, bondage for freedom, sickness for health.”³⁰ The restoration of fallen humanity is attainable in this life and fulfilled in the age to come. How, then can fallen humanity be restored? How can it shake off the servile yoke and regain the original freedom? How are the chains of every passion and desire which do not suit an angelical nature thrown off? These are thematic questions about the restored humanity which take the center of the entire system of Wesley’s theology, especially his doctrines of humanity and salvation.

Whenever Wesley spoke of salvation, he was describing an experience that has two sides—a divine side and a human side. From the divine side, salvation is by grace alone. As Wesley put it, “If he [God] did not work it would be impossible

²⁹ Wesley, The Letters of John Wesley, ed. John Telford (London: Epworth Press, 1931), 6: 327 (hereafter cited as Letters).

³⁰ Wesley, “The One Thing Needful,” in Sermons, 36.

for you to work out your own salvation. With man this is impossible.”³¹ He also recognized the total lack of human deserving: “There is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deserve the least thing at God’s hand.”³² Therefore, the apostle Paul said, “For it is by grace you have been saved.” (Eph. 2:8) Through Christ, justice has been done and grace has been given. From the human side, salvation is by faith as stated by Paul, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith.” Faith is the human response to divine grace, but even faith is not ours. Faith also is God’s free gift, given through prevenient grace.

Wesley’s doctrine of salvation is four-fold: prevenient grace, justification, sanctification, and perfection. Faith in Christ is the condition for both justification and sanctification, and faith itself is a gift of God.³³ As described earlier, Wesley emphasizes the saving grace of God in Christ and the human appropriation of the work for his/her own salvation. The saving work of Christ begins with the prevenient grace or convincing grace of God, intervening to draw human beings to God. This cannot be done by human efforts. We turn now to exploration of how Wesley understood faith and the prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying moments of God’s grace.

³¹ Wesley, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," in Sermons, 490.

³² Ibid.

³³ Wesley, "Salvation by Faith," in Sermons, 39-49.

Faith

Faith, according to Wesley, is the human response to the divine calling for the restoration of fallen humanity, but it is not even ours. For Wesley, the faith response is characterized by two movements: repentance and belief. What does it mean to repent? When the New Testament speaks of repentance, it uses the basic idea of change. By repentance Wesley meant that, whereas we once lived in sin with little thought of God, now we have changed. Now we know that sin matters; it must be forsaken. Wesley believed that this change would affect us in several ways.

First, we change in the knowledge of ourselves. We now see ourselves as living apart from God: therefore, we are in sin and vanity. At the same time, “we are convinced that we are not sufficient of ourselves to help”³⁴ our salvation. In other words, we change in the acknowledgment of ourselves as beings, having sinfulness and helplessness. Before leaving the matter of repentance, it is important to note that Wesley believed repentance emerges before true belief. In his sermon “The Lord Our Righteousness,” Wesley maintained:

. . . we must repent before we can believe the gospel. We must be cut off from dependency upon ourselves before we can truly depend on Christ. We must cast away all confidence in our own righteousness, or we cannot have a true confidence in his. Till we are delivered from trusting in anything that we do, we cannot thoroughly trust in what he has done

³⁴ Wesley, “The Circumcision of the Heart” in Sermons, 25.

and suffered. First, we receive the sentence of death in ourselves; then, we trust in him that lived and died for us.³⁵

Repentance is not the end of the whole process of salvation; it is only “the porch of religion.”³⁶

The second part of saving grace is faith. Wesley knew that it is not sufficient to focus on the problem. We must move toward the solution. Similarly, it is not sufficient to turn away from something; we must also turn toward someone, our Lord Jesus Christ. What, then, is faith? Wesley knew that faith does not mean mere intellectual assent to a creed or statement of faith. Wesley illustrated this point as follows:

Only beware thou dost not deceive thy own soul, with regard to the nature of this faith. It is not, as some have fondly conceived, a bare assent to the truth of the Bible, or the articles of our creed, or of all that is contained in the Old and New Testaments. The devils believe this . . . and yet they are devils still.³⁷

The preceding saying implies that our faith involves much more than mere intellectual assent to doctrines. Wesley did not minimize the intellectual dimension of faith; rather, he urged his people not to “despise or lightly esteem

³⁵ Wesley, “The Lord Our Righteousness,” in Sermons, 387-88.

³⁶ Wesley, Letters, 2: 268.

³⁷ Wesley, “The Way to the Kingdom,” in Sermons, 131.

reason, knowledge, or human learning.”³⁸ Wesley sought whenever possible to have a reasonable faith.

For Wesley, faith means to put our confidence and trust in the mercy and forgiveness of God. Wesley describes this as “sure trust in the mercy of God through Christ Jesus,” and “confidence in a pardoning God.”³⁹ The second element of saving faith is assurance. Saving faith brings certainty into our lives. Through faith we know that Jesus is truly the son of God. It is very interesting to note how the idea of assurance played a part in Wesley’s experience at Aldersgate, “And an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sin, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”⁴⁰ Wesley saw reliance as the third element of faith. In the act of faith we switch the control center of our lives from ourselves to Christ. Through saving faith we appropriate the power of Christ to every dimension of our lives. God forgives our sinful past, empowers us to seek God’s righteousness in the present, and offers us hope for the future.

³⁸ Cited by Thomas C. Oden, John’s Wesley’s Scriptural Christianity: A Plain Exposition of His Teaching on Christian Doctrine (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 71. For further resources and discussion of Wesley’s doctrine of reason in relation to his theology, see Oden, John’s Wesley’s Scriptural Christianity, 71-79.

³⁹ Wesley, “The Way to the Kingdom,” in Sermons, 131.

⁴⁰ Wesley, Journal, 1: 475-76.

We turn now to an exploration of how Wesley understood the preventient, justifying, and sanctifying moments of God's grace.

Prevenient Grace.

The renewal of fallen humanity, according to Wesley, starts with God's preventient grace: "salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) 'preventing grace.'"⁴¹ Wesley believed that "we are not sufficient of ourselves to help ourselves there is nothing we can do, that without the Spirit of God we can do nothing but add sin to sin."⁴² Wesley also believed that God had broken through the hopelessness. He said, "As in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive—all who accept of the means which he hath prepared, who walk by the rules which he hath given them."⁴³ In theological terms, Wesley explained this action of God as preventient grace.

By preventient grace, natural humanity can be renewed into the legal humanity

⁴¹ Ibid., 488. This doctrine of preventient grace, according to Harald Lindstrom, appears only in passing in the years immediately after 1738, and acquires increasing importance. See Harald Lindstrom, Wesley and Sanctification: A Study in the Doctrine of Salvation (London: Epworth Press, 1905), 45. While Wesley was under the influence of the Moravians to distinguish natural humanity, who is dead, and evangelical humanity, who is vitalized only through faith, the idea of preventient grace appeared seldom. Its importance increased as he diverged from the Calvinistic doctrine of election and his acceptance of Arminianism became more evident.

⁴² Wesley, "The Circumcision of Heart," in Sermons, 25.

⁴³ Wesley, "The Image of God," in Sermons, 19.

which becomes aware of the law, and fears the wrath of God's judgment upon the wicked. The prevenient act of divine grace is central to an "initial restoration,"⁴⁴ and necessary because natural humanity is spiritually totally dead: without "preventing" grace natural humanity has no hope of entering even into the "initial stage" of restoration.

When Wesley affirmed that prevenient grace is the source of salvation, he stressed its universality, as the sinfulness of humankind is universal. He, therefore, emphasized that grace is free in all fallen human beings.⁴⁵ The source of prevenient grace is not in humanity, but in God. Wesley also argued that prevenient grace is not only free in all, but also free for all.⁴⁶ After rejecting the

⁴⁴ By "initial restoration," we mean the stage of the legal humanity in the sense that the late Wesley believed that the "man under the law (i.e., the legal humanity) has the faith of "servant," but not yet actually regenerated, that is, it has not the faith of "sin." From the point of the view of the whole process of salvation, the "initial restoration" of the legal humanity is neither like the natural humanity which is not aware of its sinfulness, nor like the evangelical humanity which is initially sanctified. When we use the term, "the initial restoration," thus, it has such a connotation that the natural humanity is renewed into the legal humanity. One of the difficulty in studying Wesley may be due to the fact that Wesley attempted to deal with the restored humanity in terms of "degrees," refusing to generalize the whole state of the restored humanity in terms of an "either-or" structure. For instance, he recognized the degree of faith, the degree of personal conviction of salvation, or the degree of peace and joy after being spiritually renewed, unlike the Moravians who employed the structure of "either" having faith "or" not having faith, etc., and it became eventually one of the causes of him apart with them.

⁴⁵ Wesley, "Free Grace," in Sermons, 50.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

decree of election, and affirming universal grace in all and for all, Wesley strongly insisted on the responsibility of each individual: “the soul that chooseth life shall live, as the soul that chosseth death shall die.”⁴⁷ Thus, the condition of the renewal of fallen humanity does not depend upon the secret of God, but upon personal choice.

Thus, when Wesley spoke of prevenient grace, he meant the grace of God which operates before our experience of conversion or justification. Literally, prevenient grace means “the grace that comes before.”⁴⁸ Through his doctrine of prevenient grace, Wesley’s point was that “salvation is the total work of God, and that we can be in real though not total possession of it.”⁴⁹ The movement of salvation is God’s, not human beings’. Without this, Wesley said that we might have some room for boasting. Prevenient grace removes “all imagination of merit from man.”⁵⁰

Another point of Wesley’s doctrine of prevenient grace was that human beings

⁴⁷ Ibid., 52

⁴⁸ John Lawson, Introduction To Christian Doctrine (Wilmore, Ky.: Asbury Publishing, 1980), 214.

⁴⁹ Colin W. Williams, John Wesley’s Theology Today: A Study of the Wesleyan Tradition in the Light of Current Theological Dialogue (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979), 41.

⁵⁰ Wesley, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," in Sermons, 487.

are responsible before God for their own salvation, being free to accept God or reject God. Thus, "Wesley holds these two (human beings' inability to move themselves toward God and their freedom to respond to God) together, without resorting to any form of Pelagianism, by his twin doctrines of original sin and prevenient grace."⁵¹ The message of prevenient grace is a message of hope.

Justification

From the traditions of German pietism and Reformation theologians, Wesley learned that justification by faith is the heart of the gospel. Wesley described justification by faith as what God does for us.⁵² Wesley saw that sin has rendered people incapable of saving themselves. The only remedy is divine intervention.

Wesley affirmed that the restoration of the original image of God which is initiated by God's prevenient grace is actually carried out by God's convincing grace.⁵³ The legal humanity which is renewed from the natural humanity is renewed into the evangelical humanity. By this convincing grace the first step of restoration brings people to the inward and outward changes of the evangelical humanity. The inward change is called new birth, regeneration, initial sanctification, etc., while the outward change is called justification, reconciliation,

⁵¹ Williams, 41.

⁵² Wesley, "Justification by Faith," in Sermons, 114.

⁵³ Wesley, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," in Sermons, 488.

adoption, etc. The outward change is a transformation of the relationship between fallen humanity and God, and the inward change is the actual change of fallen humanity.

When God's convincing grace intervenes to justify, two things happened. First, God pardons us for the sins of the past: "The plain scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sins."⁵⁴ At the same time, we experience a second effect: new birth. This is what God does in us. Wesley called this God's activity of "renewing our fallen nature."⁵⁵ In his sermon "The Image of God," Wesley dealt with original sin and saw that the Fall corrupted the image of God by radically weakening the natural image and destroying the moral image. In this context, Wesley saw new birth as the mark of justification by faith as the renewal of righteousness and true holiness—the renewal of the moral image. He called it "that great change which God works in the soul when he brings it into life of righteousness."⁵⁶ By this act we are transformed into new creatures in Christ and restored to the full humanity God intended for us before the Fall.

Through justification, we are transformed from spiritual death into spiritual life. We are made to live beyond the confines of sins. However, at this time, it

⁵⁴ Ibid., 115.

⁵⁵ Wesley, "The New Birth," in Sermons, 336.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

must be noted that, in Wesley's doctrine of salvation, sin remains in the one who is justified, but it does not have to reign. In his sermon "The Scripture Way of Salvation," Wesley makes it clear as follows:

Hence may appear the extreme mischievousness of that seemly innocent opinion that there is no sin in a believer, that all sin is destroyed, root and branch, the moment a man is justified. By totally preventing that repentance which follows justification, it quite blocks up the way to sanctification in him who believes there is no sin either in his heart or life. Consequently, there is no place for his being perfected in love, to which that repentance is indispensably necessary.⁵⁷

What Wesley really wanted to say was that, if one does not continue to keep watch over one's life, one can lapse into sin after justification, but sin after conversion is not a necessity.

Sanctification

New birth, initiated by convincing grace, renews the image of God, and the power of sanctifying grace keeps us and moves us toward full maturity in Christ, or Christian perfection, through the process of sanctification. According to Wesley, the infant evangelical humanity gradually grows up into the mature evangelical humanity through the means of grace until it meets the second change, i.e., sanctification. This takes place by sanctifying grace.⁵⁸ Prevenient grace is

⁵⁷ Wesley, "The Scripture Way of Salvation," in Sermons, 378.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

enough for all fallen humans to be equipped to respond to the divine calling of restoration. Convincing grace, however, is not enough to renew fallen humanity inwardly. The infant evangelical humanity needs sanctifying grace in order to restore fully the original image of God to the mature evangelical humanity. What, then, is the responsibility of human beings in the whole process of restoring their fallen humanity. According to Wesley, we must be “workers together with him [God]”⁵⁹ since God works for and in us.

Justification is “what God does for us,”; sanctification is “what God works in us by God’s spirit.”⁶⁰ In regard to the theme of sanctification, Wesley said as follows:

‘We are justified by faith alone, and yet by such a faith as is not alone’ in the sense of being fruitless. ‘Faith alone is the condition of present salvation,’ on the assumption that when ‘faith is given, holiness commences in the soul; for that instant ‘the love of God (which is the source of holiness) is shed abroad in the heart,’ ‘This was the view of religion,’ which from the early age of thirty to the advanced age of seventy-four,’ ‘I scrupled not to term perfection. This is the view I have of it.’⁶¹

In this beginning of holiness, some important things happen, which enable us to mature in Christian life.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 491.

⁶⁰ Wesley, “Justification by Faith,” in Sermons, 114.

⁶¹ Cited by Oden, 314.

First, real righteousness begins. In conversion, God not only declares us righteous, but also actually makes us righteous with the righteousness of Christ. It is not a perfected righteousness that needs no further development, but it is genuine righteousness.⁶² Related to this is an authentic purity. In conversion our hearts are cleansed from sin and made fit dwelling place for the Spirit. The activity of the Spirit within us works to transform total our lives. Now personal holiness expands into social holiness. Salvation from sin becomes salvation for service. What God has done in our spirits, God now moves out to do in our bodies, minds, emotions, and relationships.⁶³ According to Steve Harper's interpretation, "Initial sanctification begins the authentic development of Christlike character and provides a base for the Holy Spirit to purify and empower our lives [toward the fulfillment of Christian perfection as the goal of humanity]."⁶⁴ Sanctification is built upon justification and constitutes the goal of human life. Justification opens the way to a new life; sanctification is the heart of religion and the goal of Christian living.

⁶² Wesley, "The New Birth," in Sermons, 340.

⁶³ Ibid., 340-41.

⁶⁴ Harper, 70.

Perfection as a Goal of Humanity

Through sanctification, God works in people's lives toward entire sanctification or perfection. Christian perfection is the goal of Christian life, which means the fullness of one's love for God and neighbor.⁶⁵ According to Wesley, this perfect love is initiated and fulfilled by God's grace. The theme of Christian perfection is the most distinctive aspect of Wesley's theology, especially in relation to his doctrines of humanity and salvation. Wesley, in A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, consistently held that Christian perfection means a "pure intention of heart" and fulfilling the will of God, i.e., love of God with all our hearts, mind, soul, and strength and neighbor.⁶⁶

The claim of Christian perfection was controversial to many in Wesley's day, as to many today. As Thomas C. Oden points out, "some objected that humanity is so far fallen into evil that talk of perfection is ludicrous," while "some objected that Wesley was exalting wrongly, even Pelagianly, claiming that native humanity is of itself capable of achieving redemption."⁶⁷ In reaction to the former, Wesley argued that, while humanity is fallen into sin, the power of God's prevenient and

⁶⁵ Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection: As Believed and Taught by Rev. John Wesley from 1725 to 1777 (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1896), 13-15.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 9-13.

⁶⁷ Oden, 313-14.

saving grace is always greater than the power of sin; grace is able to renew our fallen nature in Christ's redemptive and empower us to fulfill the ultimate transformation of humanity, which God intended to be before the Fall.⁶⁸ In reaction to the latter, Wesley argued that Christian perfection could be achieved not by natural human competency but only by the grace of God, and that there is no room for boasting regarding the achievement of perfection since prevenient grace removes "all imagination of merit from man."⁶⁹

Wesley found his idea of Christian perfection in studying Scripture.⁷⁰ Wesley said:

When I began to make the Scripture my study, I began to see that Christians are called to love God with all their heart and to serve Him with all their strength; which is precisely what I apprehended to be meant by the scriptural term perfection.⁷¹

It is that habitual disposition of soul which in the sacred writings is termed holiness, and which directly implies the being cleansed from

⁶⁸ Ibid., 313.

⁶⁹ Wesley, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," in Sermons, 487.

⁷⁰ In formulating his idea of Christian perfection, Wesley was greatly indebted to the rich tradition of the past, particularly from the eastern church fathers (e.g., Gregory of Nyssa), and from persons such as Thomas a Kempis, Jeremy Taylor, and William Law. All of them placed the heart of Christianity in one's intentions and motives—often calling it "perfect love." See Wesley, "Christian Perfection," in Sermon, 70-84; Oden, John's Wesley's Scriptural Christianity, 312-13; and Langford, Practical Divinity, 38-39.

⁷¹ Wesley, Letters, 3: 120-21.

sin, ‘from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit’; and, by consequence, the being endued with those virtues which were in Christ Jesus; the being so ‘renewed in the image of our mind’ as to be ‘perfect as Father in heaven is perfect.⁷²

The perfect love for God! This ideal has a venerable history in Christian spirituality. The goal of spiritual life is simple, single-minded love for God; it is worship with the whole heart. To love carries with it a love for, and a commitment to, neighbor. Therefore, Christian perfection is two-dimensional--our love of God and our love of neighbor; it is a response to the Great Commandments. This is the basic idea of Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection.

In order to explore Christian perfection, one can explore what it is not. First, it is not spiritual infallibility. Wesley made it clear that, in perfection, a Christian is still liable to sin, and does not possess absolute knowledge, absolute judgment, or absolute moral performance.⁷³ Second, Christian perfection does not make one a superior Christian. Wesley rejected any idea of a status system among believers. On the contrary, he maintained that any who experienced Christian perfection would be filled with humility. Third, Christian perfection is not immunity from

⁷² Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, 6.

⁷³ Wesley, “Christian Perfection,” in Sermons, 70-73. The following summary as to the limits of Christian Perfection is from the same source, e.g., Wesley’s sermon, “Christian Perfection.”

life's problems. Christian perfection is not a vaccination against reality. Fourth, Christian perfection is not a static, one-time experience; however, Wesley taught that a person could be entirely sanctified in an instance.⁷⁴ In regard to this claim, Wesley never separated the moment of entire sanctification from one's total Christian experience. When Wesley spoke of the instantaneous nature of Christian perfection, he usually stressed the process that precedes and follows it.⁷⁵

Having recognized some descriptions of what Christian perfection is not, we may now look at how Wesley described it positively. Most importantly, it is the single-minded intention of love. This single-minded intention of love comes from Matthew 22:37-38, "Love the Lord your God with your whole heartLove your neighbor as yourself" (New Revised Standard Version). In this context, the heart of Christian perfection is in the will, not in one's action. Actions vary, intentions remain constant. However, to speak of Christian perfection as single-minded intention does not minimize action; it only stresses that the experience of being is deeper than the level of doing. "It [Christian perfection] is perfect love. This is the essence of it...."⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, 168.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 169.

Beginning with the single-minded intention of love, the second nature of Christian perfection is the power over sin. In his sermon “Christian perfection,” Wesley puts it this way:

It remains, then, that Christians are saved in this world from all sin, from all unrighteousness; that they are now in such a sense perfect as not to commit sin, and to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers.⁷⁷

Simply put, Wesley did not believe that there was ever a time when a believer had to commit actions of sin. In any conceivable situation, the grace of God is always greater than the lure of temptation. Wesley said, “Thus doth Jesus ‘save his people from their sins’: and not only from outward sins, but also from the sins of their hearts; from evil thoughts and evil tempers.”⁷⁸ This remark indicates some important points. Wesley believed that, as long as we are in the body, temptations to sin will always be there. He also believed that the love of God, in and through Jesus Christ, at work in the heart of a believer can exclude actual transgression, both inwardly and outwardly. Thus, in Christian perfection, there is power to overcome sin.

The third explanation that Wesley gave for Christian perfection is radical dependence on Christ. He described it this way:

Have a pure intention of heart, a steadfast regard to his [Christ] glory in all your actions. For then, and not till then, is that mind in us,

⁷⁷ Wesley, “Christian Perfection,” in *Sermons*, 84.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 83.

which was also in Christ Jesus, when in every motion of our heart, in every word of our tongue, in every work of our hands we pursue nothing but in relation to and in subordination to his pleasure.⁷⁹

Such dependence is total and continuous. It is the recognition that whatever we are and do is the result of Christ's power at work within us.

A fourth Wesleyan description of Christian perfection is equipment for ministry. One of the meanings of sanctification is that we are set apart for the service of God, namely service for the world. Wesley exhorted his people: "Agreeable to this his one desire is the one design of his life, namely, 'to do not his own will, but the will of him that sent him.'"⁸⁰ This implies that Christian perfection is not only a personal salvation, but also a social imperative toward social salvation. Finally, Christian perfection is an experience in which to grow. Wesley maintained:

It [Christian perfection] is improvable. It is so far from lying in an indivisible point, from being incapable of increase, that one perfected in love may grow in grace far swifter than he did before.⁸¹

Thus, Christian perfection is the quality of Christian ethical and moral life. In this respect, George Croft Cell states, "Wesleyan reconstruction of the Christian ethic life is an original and unique synthesis of the Protestant ethic of grace and the

⁷⁹ Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, 9.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 16.

⁸¹ Ibid., 168.

Catholic ethic of holiness."⁸² The idea and practice of Christian perfection in this life is conformity to the mind of Christ, made possible by the work of the Holy Spirit within us. Christian perfection is progressive, a continual renewal of love and growth in grace.

In conclusion, Wesley was not content to speak only of possibility, nor was he satisfied with partial realization of the goal of human life. There was, consequently, a strong emphasis on the nature of full humanity, expressed in theological terms such as entire sanctification, Christian perfection, and perfect love. Entire sanctification is one potential stage in the process of Christian life. Justification is generally followed by sanctification, which may lead to an instantaneous event of entire sanctification or to a more gradual sanctification. In either case, human life is fulfilled in holiness.

To love God necessarily carries with it a love for neighbor; sanctification implies and includes moral life. Sanctification implies servanthood; it is expressed as an unrestrained caring for people. The new life in Christ is ethical in content.

To experience Christian perfection is to be restored in the image of God. As fallen, persons have forfeited their authentic humanity; as sanctified, they are restored to and mature in the life that God intends. Human life is graced toward

⁸² George Croft Cell, The Rediscovery of John Wesley (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1935), 361.

“inward holiness” (our love of God) and “outward holiness” (our consequent love of neighbor) and reaches its goal of true “happiness.”⁸³

Wesley’s claim of authentic Christian life experienced in perfection or entire sanctification was motivated by his desire to encourage people to seek and strive more, as promised in the Bible.⁸⁴ For Wesley, perfection was the ultimate goal of Christian life, a goal toward which all Christians should look and which, he was convinced, some attained. By the power of sanctifying grace we can conform to the perfect love of God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and to that of neighbor. This is not a matter of human achievement. At every moment in the process of entire sanctification God’s grace is primary. In other words, entire sanctification is a work of divine grace. But God’s grace works in all people; it works in and through their own personal decision and acting. God’s grace and human responsibility, in a whole process of human salvation, are bound together; this is one of the most distinguishable characteristics in Wesley’s doctrines of anthropology and soteriology. Wesley wanted to emphasize human responsibility, but only in the context of the primacy of God’s grace.

⁸³ Albert C. Outler, Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1975), 82.

⁸⁴ Wesley identified perfection as the “character of a Methodist.” See Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, 13.

Chapter 7

Wesley's Educational Theory and Practice

In the previous chapter, we have briefly reviewed major components of Wesley's doctrines of humanity and salvation. For Wesley, formal education and shared Christian life were fundamental instruments for the continual growth in grace toward Christian perfection. The purpose of this chapter is to examine how Wesley incorporated his theological anthropology into educational theory and practices, and to discuss the formative influences upon the formation of Wesley's educational theory. We will also explore Wesley's educational practices in formal schools and small groups, seeking to discover implicit educational guidelines for the formation of full humanity.

Theological Foundation of Wesley's Education System

While Wesley gleaned much from his experience, observation, and study, his understanding of Christian education and nurture were fundamentally the outgrowth of his biblical and theological conceptions. He did not speak directly about "Christian education," but much of what he did and said was focused on what we call Christian education in the contemporary church. He believed in the depravity of the entire human race, including its youngest members. Both youth and adults are by nature entirely lacking in God's natural and moral images, and consequently are alienated from God. Such a negative view of the sinful nature of humanity, however, must not be separated from his understanding of the power of

divine grace. By the power of divine grace, God has acted to endow human beings with capacity to respond to God's calling for the restoration of fallen humanity. Everyone can turn toward God through repentance by divine grace. Through faith, one can come to justification, and finally, to sanctification (moving toward Christian perfection). Such a powerful grace caused Wesley to emphasize the crucial nature of Christian teaching and nurturing, which would foster an individual's receptivity to the saving work of God. Education in faith was crucially important for Wesley because it was an instrument by which persons were brought to conversion. But Christian education and nurture did not terminate with conversion. They were, indeed, instruments of the continual growth in grace toward Christian perfection. Wesley envisioned Christian perfection as a realistic possibility in this life.

In this context of a theological view of humanity and salvation, Wesley believed that the primary purpose of Christian education was to restore the fallen humanity, and to lead them into the life of perfect love with the help of divine grace. Wesley illustrates this point as follows:

The bias of nature is set the wrong way: education is designed to set it right. This, by the grace of God, is to turn the bias from self will, pride, anger, revenge, and the love of the world, to resignation, lowliness, meekness, and the love of God.¹

¹ Wesley, "A Thought on the Manner of Educating Children," in Works of John Wesley, 13: 476.

Thus, education for Wesley is the means through which people are brought into conversion, i.e., the transition from the self-centered life to God-centered life.

Purpose of Education

Wesley did not use the term Christian education, but he practiced and reflected what we now call by that term. For this reason, we can reflect on his theories and practices. For Wesley, Christian education could be described as a whole process which guides and supports in becoming Christian, experiencing God's grace, and practicing holy living. Educational activity aims particularly toward the radical transition of humanity from the fallen self to the sanctified self. The fundamental educational ideas and practices conceived by Wesley are centered around the wholeness of humanity. The culminating goal in Wesley's system is to realize Christian perfection. Wesley saw Christian perfection as a process which required devoted and diligent teaching and nurturing.

In "A Plain Account of Kingswood School," Wesley articulates his goal and methodology of Christian education as follows:

. . . our first point was, to answer the design of Christian education, by forming their minds, through the help of God, to wisdom and holiness, by instilling the principles of true religion, speculative and practical, and training them up in the ancient way, that they might be rational, scriptural Christians.²

² John Wesley, "A Short Account of the School in Kingswood near Bristol," in Works of John Wesley, 13: 293.

This statement indicates that for Wesley, educational methodology was to be both a cognitive process of didactic learning and a formative process of spiritual nurturing. It also implies that, for Wesley, Christian education aiming toward Christian perfection, must be initiated and governed by the Holy Spirit because of his conviction that the Spirit of God is the power and guidance for the whole process of Christian growth. Accordingly, Wesley's understanding of the purposes and methods of Christian religious education is spirit-centered and holistic.

Sources of Wesley's Educational Theory

As noted earlier, Wesley's view on religious education grew in part, from exposure to educational theorists and the practices that were shaped by them. Therefore, we now turn to some major figures, such as Susanna Wesley, John Amos Comenius, John Milton, and John Locke, in order to understand Wesley's educational ideas and practices.

Susanna Wesley

Wesley believed that the most valuable source of Wesley's educational ideas and practice as to how children should be trained was his mother, Susanna Wesley. She was responsible for rearing and nurturing her ten children at the Epworth Rectory. She refused to send her children to the local schoolmaster, John Hollan, since she felt that he was incompetent in religious education and wicked. "She

looked upon all her children as talents committed to her in trust by God."³ Although she desired that they should be vested in useful knowledge, it was her "principle intention to save their souls."⁴ To achieve that goal of saving her children, she made it her habit to converse one evening a week with each child separately. Thursday evenings were devoted to John. Being deeply impressed by those conferences with his mother, John, at eight years of age, was judged by his father fit to receive holy communion.⁵

Moreover, Susanna Wesley made her own books appropriate to her children's need since she could not find books available to meet her standards. Among her books were: "An Exposition of the Apostles Creed," "An Exposition of the Ten Commandments," and "Religious Conference Written for the Use of My Children."⁶

Later, in a letter to her son written in July 24, 1732, Susanna introduced the idea of "will-breaking":

³ Elmer L. Towns, "John Wesley and Religious Education," Religious Education 65 (1970): 318.

⁴ Eliza Clarke, Susanna Wesley (London: W. H. Allen and Co., 1886), 47.

⁵ Towns, 318.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 319.

I insist upon conquering the will of children betimes because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual.⁷

Also, in this letter, Susanna articulated her principles of child rearing. Susanna's principles of child rearing can be summarized in the following manners. First, cowardice and fear of punishment often leads a child to lying. To prevent this, she instituted a law that whosoever was charged with a fault, if he/she would confess it and promise to amend, he/she should not be beaten. Second, no sinful action such as lying, pilfering, playing at church, playing on the Lord's day, disobedience, quarreling should ever go unpunished. Third, no child should ever be beaten twice for the same fault. Fourth, every act of obedience should always be commended and rewarded. Fifth, if a child performed any act of obedience or did anything with an intention to please, though the performance was not well, the act should be kindly accepted, and the child with sweetness directed how to do better in the future. Sixth, personal property should be inviolably preserved, and no one should invade the property of another in the smallest manner. Seventh, promises are strictly observed. Eighth, no girl should be taught to work until she can read very well: and then she be kept to her work with the same application and for the same time that she be held to reading.⁸

⁷ Wesley, Journal, 3: 36.

⁸ Ibid., 38-39.

As we noticed, Susanna Wesley ran a strict home school; however, her strict discipline was laced with parental love, saturated with tears and prayers for salvation, and highlighted by individualized (one-to-one conference) instruction. This personal and parental care was very much appreciated by her son, John Wesley. In this spirit, Wesley urged parents to carry out their responsibility for family education by remembering that their children were "immortal spirits whom God hath, for a time, entrusted to your care...[so] that you may train them up in all holiness."⁹ Moreover, Wesley told parents that they must restrain their yet-unconverted children through advice, persuasion, and correction. Correction was to include corporal punishment, and Wesley reminded them that this should be done only after all else fails. He wrote, "Whatever should be done be done with mildness; nay indeed with kindness too."¹⁰

In addition to parental advice, persuasion, and correction, the Christian parent was also to add instruction. This instruction was to be done "early, plainly, frequently, and patiently."¹¹ Wesley understood instruction as an urgent matter, arguing that "the corruption of nature is earlier than our instruction can be we

⁹ Wesley, "On Family Religion," in Works, 3: 337.

¹⁰ Ibid., 339.

¹¹ Ibid., 340.

should take all pains to counteract this corruption as early as possible."¹² This project should start as soon as the child can talk and understand, "because the bias of nature is set the wrong way; education is designed to set it right."¹³

Thus, Susanna Wesley's strong beliefs in the necessity of an early child education in a familial setting and its effective practical and skillful ideas were discovered in John Wesley's practical exhortations to his people (parents). Wesley believed,

"If family religion be neglected? If care be not taken of the rising generation? Will not the present revival of religion in a short time die away?"¹⁴

This implies that, in Wesley's system, evangelism and education were dependent on each other.

Furthermore, Wesley, like his mother, wrote and edited numerous resources for the nurture of children in a Christian family, such as "Prayers for Families," "Prayers for Children," "Lessons for Children," etc.

Amos Comenius

The writings and schools of Amos Comenius also influenced Wesley's

¹² John Wesley, "A Thought on the Manner of Educating Children," in Works of John Wesley, 13: 476.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Wesley, "On Family Religion," in Works, 3: 335.

education system. The Moravians brought Comenius to Wesley's attention. When Wesley traveled to Germany, he could observe two Comenius-patterned schools at Jena and Herrnhut. For Comenius, the ultimate aim of religious education was to enable people to have eternal happiness with God, which was the primary principle of his major work The Great Didactic. For Comenius, education was not merely a means to eradicate natural sin, but to build up a moral control over persons and to pass on knowledge, virtue and piety.¹⁵ In order to achieve the goal of education, Comenius developed some principles in his The Great Didactic.

To his own education system, Wesley applied the following principles learned from Comenius:¹⁶ First, Comenius taught that the teacher must grasp the right occasion to make learning effective, or what some now call teachable moments. Following Comenius' developmental concerns, Wesley insisted that the content to be taught must be adopted to the child's cognitive and intellectual level. Second, Comenius insisted on understanding rather than memorization. Like Comenius, Wesley asked teachers and parents to help their children understand subjects and explain meanings in their own language. Third, Comenius emphasized the acquisition of knowledge, virtue, piety, in this order; he said that, without

¹⁵ Body, 49.

¹⁶ In summary, I am indebted to Tracy, "Christian Education in the Wesleyan Mode," 44-45.

knowledge, neither virtue nor piety could happen. Wesley believed this. Fourth, education must begin in pre-school years. Both Comenius and Wesley were eager to express the importance of teaching children at the very first sign of understanding. Wesley felt that the beginning of conscious religious instruction should coincide with the dawn of reason. Fifth, Comenius spoke of education as "amending the will"; Wesley carried this quite a bit further with his "will-breaking" doctrine. Sixth, love in education. Comenius had been thrashed through school, so he established a school based on love. Wesley believed in love too, but held to severity much more than Comenius. Seventh, education of the poor was a keynote of both Comenius and Wesley. In fact the humanitarian tone of the Methodist revival gave a humane tone to Methodist education. Eighth, the best education is pleasurable. Here Wesley seemed to reject Comenius' belief that the most effective learning takes place in an atmosphere of pleasant emotion. Wesley believed that education must be painful to be profitable.

Perhaps the most visible contribution that Comenius made to Wesley relates to the complete surrender of the child's will to that of his teacher. The idea of "will-amending," of course, was not new to Wesley. As we saw, his mother had tried to thoroughly amend the wills of her children at their early ages. Wesley was not hesitant to replace the term, "will-amending" with the term "will-breaking" in order to place great faith in it. Wesley said to his people:

A wise parent should begin to break their [the children's] will the first moment it appears. In the whole art of Christian education, there is nothing more important than this. . . . The will of a parent is to a little child in the place of the will of God.¹⁷

As we have already noticed, many of the principles found in Comenius were also used by Susanna Wesley. From this account, it is best to say, with Elmer Towns, that "Comenius' educational philosophy reinforced the approach to learning laid by Susanna."¹⁸

John Locke

John Locke also influenced Wesley's education system. Wesley built up his educational scheme of sound religious training combined with perfect control of the children. Concerning the perfect control of children, Wesley found much to agree with in the works of Locke; thus, he did not hesitate to adopt Locke's approaches. The citation of passages from Wesley's work placed parallel to corresponding passages from Locke's Some Thoughts Concerning Education shows not only a striking similarity in content but even a resemblance in literal expression. Locke said: "Few of Adam's children are so happy as not to be born with some bias in their natural temper, which is the business of education to take

¹⁷ Wesley, "On the Education of Children," Works, 3: 354.

¹⁸ Towns, 320.

off or counterbalance."¹⁹ Wesley used almost the same words,

"The bias of nature is set the wrong way: education is designed to set it right. This, by the grace of God, is to turn the bias from self-will, pride, anger, revenge and the love of the world, to resignation, lowliness, meekness and the love of God"²⁰

Wesley's use of the term "bias" seems to indicate indebtedness to the words of Locke, or to sources which also informed Locke.

Again when each man discusses the importance of inuring children into hardship, a striking similarity of detail is seen in their method, which can hardly be merely accidental. Note this example:

Most children's constitutions are either spoiled or at least harmed by cockering and tenderness. . . . Let his [her] bed hard, and rather quilts than feathers. Hard lodging strengthens the parts; whereas being buried every night in feathers melts and dissolves the body (Locke).²¹

All their beds have mattresses upon them, not feather-beds, both because they are most healthy, and because we would keep them at the utmost distance from softness and effeminacy (Wesley).²²

Alfred H. Body ties Locke and Wesley together by such parallel statements:

In spite of the manifest differences between the scheme of education proposed by each man, a study of the parallel passages quoted by

¹⁹ Cited by Body, 56.

²⁰ Wesley, "A Thought on the Manner of Educating Children," in Works of John Wesley, 13: 476.

²¹ Cited by Body, 57.

²² Ibid.

each man does leave the strong feeling that Wesley was really indebted to Locke for much of his educational theory.²³

John Milton

John Milton's educational ideas, especially about curriculum, also seems to have influenced Wesley's education system. Milton, whose educational ideas Wesley openly admired, was an essentialist.²⁴ In his Treatise on Education, Milton urged people to give their children a classical education at a boarding school and make everything (even war games) like the schools of Greece and Rome.²⁵ Many of the classics Milton recommended were included in the Kingswood curriculum. Milton says: "The end of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright."²⁶ Influenced by Milton, Wesley says: "Education

²³ Body, 60.

²⁴ Wayne R. Rood articulates educational philosophy in the three-fold categories: personalism, essentialism, and experimentalism. The aim of essentialism is to transmit knowledge and to master the facts. Eventually, the content of curriculum includes the classical. Especially for essentialism, see Wayne R. Rood, Understanding Christian Education (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 266-352.

²⁵ Tracy, 43.

²⁶ Ibid.

therefore is to be considered as reason borrowed at second hand, which is, as far as it can, to supply the loss of original perfection."²⁷

Apparently, Wesley, when trapped by the vision of educating his world parish, sought answers and new visions in theology and the Bible. Then he searched the best educational theories available. He consulted his mother. He visited Jena and Hernnhut, the Moravian schools nourished by the insights of Comenius. He read and liked Milton's writings on education. He read and disliked Locke's writings on education—but then seemingly copied some of them for the use of his schools. He read Rousseau on education and dismissed him as useless. But the important point is that he critically studied the best writings and institutions available and selected what he thought to be the best suited his theology and the mission of the church.

Wesley's Educational Practices in His Schools

As we noticed, Wesley's education system was shaped by various influences: his home experiences, educational theorists in his day, and his own theological reflections. Now we examine how Wesley embodied his educational principles in the educational practices of his schools.

The Foundery was the first school which Wesley started. It was located in a poor part of London where Wesley noted that the teeming offspring of the poor

²⁷ Wesley, "On the Education of Children," in Works, 3:348.

were given no schooling at all: thus, a child grew up "like the wild ass's colt."²⁸

Wesley saw the potential for education to function as an instrument of social reform and sought to use it for the benefit of the disadvantaged socio-economic class.

Wesley hired school-headmaster Silas Todd and some other teachers. In addition to teachers, two stewards were appointed.²⁹ They were to see that the rules were observed, raise money for the school, and control expenditures. Moreover, they were expected to talk with the teachers every Tuesday and to meet the students twice each week about spiritual matters. Of particular importance were the Wednesday morning meetings in which the Stewards and teachers met the parents of the students and "gave them advice as to how they might plan their home-life so that its influence on their children might assist the work of the school."³⁰

The Foundery operated on six rules:³¹

- (1) Minimum age for admission was six years
- (2) Chapel attendance for the morning sermon was mandatory
- (3) The school day was to be from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. with one hour for lunch

²⁸ Cited by Tracy, 35.

²⁹ For Wesley's educational principles and practices in the Foundery School, see Body, 77-83.

³⁰ Body, 81.

³¹ Ibid., 79-80.

- (4) No play was allowed
- (5) No talking was permitted with classmates. No child was to speak in school except to the master
- (6) Two unexpected absences in one week meant automatic expulsion.

The Kingswood School building began the same year that the Foundery became a school in 1740. The school was located three miles from Bristol near a national forest. It was an ideal site (except for the lack of a natural water supply) for Wesley's experiment because it would take the students away from what he saw as the evil influence of the city streets.

On Friday, June 24, 1748, at the opening ceremony for the three-story building, Wesley delivered his most important sermon on education. His text was Proverbs 22:6. In the introduction he told the gathered teachers, students, parents, and guests that "education...is to be considered as reason borrowed at second-hand, which is as far as it can, to supply the loss of original perfection."³² The aim for Kingswood then was to teach children "how to think, and judge, and act according to the strictest rules of Christianity."³³

Just as "physic" was to restore physical health, Wesley told the audience that a Kingswood education was to restore spiritual health. The need, according to Wesley, was desperate because every child is infected by seven spiritual

³² Wesley, "On the Education of Children," in Works, 3: 348.

³³ Ibid., 349.

diseases.³⁴ The seven spiritual diseases can be summarized as follows. First, the disease of atheism is treated. Children learn theism as parents and teachers model it by deed and word. Second, the disease of self-will is identified as a demon which Kingswood will seek to exorcise. Wise parents and teachers are to conquer this will as soon as it appears, for "in the whole art of Christian education there is nothing more important than this"³⁵ Third, the disease of pride is a malady for which a cure must be sought. Wesley warned that almost all parents fan this flame by praising their children to their face. Here is one of the most frightening passages in Wesley:

. . . teach your children...that they are fallen spirits; that they are fallen short of that glorious images of God wherein they were first created. . . . Show them that in pride, passion, and revenge, they are now like the devil, they are like the beasts.³⁶

Fourth is the disease of loving the world. This disease may be fatal if "littering toys. . . needless ornaments. . . necklaces and ruffles are draped upon the child."³⁷ Simplicity is to be prized, and richness, pomp, and all finery are to be despised. Fifth, the disease of anger must be also cured. Teach children the spirit of the

³⁴ Ibid., 350-60.

³⁵ Ibid., 354.

³⁶ Ibid., 356.

³⁷ Ibid., 358.

Sermon on the Mountain for the primary cure of that disease. Sixth, the disease of falsehood, or lying, is universal. Education and grace must deal with it. Parents and teachers should teach children "a love of truth--of veracity, sincerity, and simplicity, and of openness both of spirit and behavior."³⁸ Seventh, the disease of injustice must also be cured. No degree of unmercifulness is to be indulged whether it involves other children, birds, animals or even snakes. Children must be taught the concepts of justice and mercy.

Wesley reminded the listening teachers and parents that, in the end, God is the physician of souls, for no human beings can "bring a clean thing out of an unclean."³⁹ At the same time, God generally prefers to work through people.

The rules for Kingswood School were identical with those of Comenius-patterned schools in Germany.⁴⁰ The children were to come to Kingswood and not to see their parents at home again until they finished the course of study. They were to rise at 4:00 a.m. They had an hour of private devotions before an hour of public worship which began at 6:00 a.m. They had an hour of work on the grounds at various chores until the 7:00 a.m. breakfast hour at which time they

³⁸ Ibid., 360.

³⁹ Ibid., 351.

⁴⁰ For the details of the rules for Kingswood School, see "A Short Account of The School Kingswood, Near Bristol," in Works of John Wesley, 13: 283-302.

were served milk porridge or water gruel. Classes were then held until 11:00 o'clock. An hour of work or walking preceded the noon dinner. Classes resumed at 1 p.m. and continued until five o'clock. At five p.m., they had another period of private prayer, followed by a "walking or working" session and supper of bread and cheese or butter and milk. At 7 p.m. the school held public worship, and at 8 p.m. the children went to bed "the youngest going first." Sunday was a day of rest, the children were allowed to sleep until six, then get up and go directly to breakfast. There were, even on every Sunday, several hours of class work and, of course, two public worships. No play was planned and none was to be allowed. Supervision by the school staff was to be constant--24 hours per day.

Through the years of Wesley's life, Kingswood was primarily a boarding school. When Wesley discovered that Kingswood boys were not being admitted to Oxford (because of their Methodist label), he strengthened the curriculum and guaranteed that any graduate of Kingswood would be "a better scholar than nine in ten of the graduates at Oxford or Cambridge."⁴¹ Wesley screened and edited all the textbooks. There are 1,729 printed pages in the texts which Wesley himself prepared for use in the ordinary school course. In addition, we must add Wesley's contribution of a fifty-volume Christian Library, written mostly at Kingswood

⁴¹ Wesley, "A Short Account of the School in Kingswood near Bristol," in Works of John Wesley, 13: 289.

between the years 1749 and 1755, and a four-volume edition of The Concise History of England, as well as the five grammar books and the Compendium of Logic. These efforts represent an enormous amount of time and energy from Wesley; this made the educational project possible. Thus, Wesley once said that no other project had taken as much of his life as Kingswood.⁴² Wesley was the most vigorous figure of his century in trying to overcome the diseases of sin, ignorance, and poverty through education; his approach was based on discipline and the Gospel of grace.

Wesley's Group Ministry

One of Wesley's strong contributions to Christian education was his practice of group ministry which stressed spiritual renewal, identity formation and personal and community transformation.⁴³ The class-meeting has been selected because it bears the most influential instructional unit in Methodism, and Wesley's greatest contribution to the technology of group experience. Three important characteristics of the class-meeting can be summarized in the following manner.⁴⁴ First, the dynamic of the class-meeting was clearly one of giving an account. It

⁴² Tracy, 40.

⁴³ For an analysis of Wesley's group methodologies, see Henderson, John Wesley's Instructional Groups.

⁴⁴ In summary, I am indebted to Henderson, 91-102.

was not the purpose of the dialogue between the leader and each member to press for an intensive confessional, but rather a straightforward accounting of what had taken place during the preceding week. This rendered the meetings as a process of mutual response and support rather than inward inquiry. In this circle of friendship, one could cultivate the most intimate and helpful friendship and discipleship. Spiritual fellowship and identity formation were then a mark of this structure of mutual discipleship; this was a distinctive contribution of the class-meetings to early Methodist discipleship.

The second characteristic was the centrality of the class-meeting leader. David Lowes Watson indicates that the class meeting created a crucial element in authority and communication, extending from Wesley to the Methodist membership as a whole.⁴⁵ In the new connectional system, the leader was perceived as a peer who was on the same level with his class-mates. He or she, however, was also chosen and appointed for this task in order to assume spiritual oversight and pastoral care for his/her colleagues.⁴⁶ In the arrangement of leadership lies one of the strengths of the Methodist concept of leadership; it took

⁴⁵ David Lowes Watson, The Early Methodist Class Meeting: Its Origins and Significance (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1985), 98.

⁴⁶ For the description of duties of a class leader, see page 168 of this work.

no training or talent to be a class leader. Anyone could do it as long as one proved to have qualities of faithfulness, honesty, and concern for people. This one requirement of the Methodist economy was commended by Henderson as largely “responsible for the practicality and down to earth usefulness of Methodism for more than a century.”⁴⁷ This leadership format is in fact very helpful to most Third World churches where a mass of leadership is needed, and it provides a sense of identity and ownership to all members knowing that each one can be or will be a leader.

The third characteristic of the class-meeting was the co-educational experience in small group development. The makeup of the class-meetings were heterogeneous in terms of sex, age, social standing, and spiritual readiness. Moreover, the leadership was open to women. In other words, the tradition of class-meetings was breaking the traditions of sexism and classism, leading not only to spiritual renewal or identity formation, but also to social transformation in the new structure of society. Further implications of the class-meeting will be discussed in the final chapter.

⁴⁷ Henderson, 193.

Conclusion

Born and raised in the age of seeking social, moral, and spiritual reform, Wesley deeply experienced the diseases of fallen humanity. His radical reaffirmation of the reality and danger of sin did not come from the standpoint of pessimism, but from the perspective of realism. In this context, Wesley's primary mission was to set right the bias of fallen humanity, and to lead his people toward "inward holiness" (the love of God) and outward holiness (the love of neighbor) until they reach their goal of true "happiness." His mission was successfully completed through his evangelical movement, and his success was largely due to his novel educational principles and practices.

At the first glance, one may argue that Wesley's will-breaking passage is outrageous, and that the rule of no play in his schools is eccentric. This critique is important; however, we need also to understand the issues and practices of Wesley's time and what he really meant. Let us plainly admit that Wesley's eccentricities are sometimes difficult to understand and sometimes laughable. We learn, however, that what Wesley really meant in prohibiting play at his schools was that there would be no bear-baiting, cock-fighting, or crap shooting on campus.

The primary concern of Wesley's infamous will-breaking concept was to emphasize the complete surrender of the child's will to the will of God. Just as physic is to restore physical health, Wesley told his people that a Kingswood

education was to restore spiritual health. He firmly believed that the need was desperate because every child born of woman is infected by seven spiritual diseases. The disease of self will is one in particular that Kingswood will seek to exorcise. All men and women worship themselves, make their own wills their god and king. Wise parents and teachers are to conquer this will as soon as it appears, for “in the whole art of Christian education there is nothing more important than this.”⁴⁸

In Wesley’s education system, however, the rules for the experiment to help stamp out the seven deadly diseases were in harmony with discipline, education, religion and love. It must be noticed that his strictness of discipline was always accompanied with parental zeal for the care and cure of soul. In addition, Wesley reminded his people that, in the end, God is the physician of soul, and that, at the same time, God generally prefers to work through people.⁴⁹ Thus, Wesley’s notion of “will-breaking” did not necessarily mean neglecting human dignity and freedom: rather, it reaffirmed the necessity of restoring of fallen humanity, the transition from the self-centered will to the God-neighbor-centered will.

⁴⁸ Wesley, “On the Education of Children,” in Works, 3:354

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 351.

Some may argue that Wesley used behavioristic methodology.⁵⁰ In a behavioristic system, we can control the environment and precisely predict behavior. In this view, human beings are created by their environment. Human freedom is seen as a mere myth. At Kingswood, Wesley acted in a manner almost as Skinner. He planted the school in the woods, far from the corrupting influences of the wicked cities. He arranged a constant religious atmosphere; he provided twenty-four hour supervision, censored textbooks. Any student who was deemed a bad influence on classmates was expelled immediately. In spite of his faith in the influence of environment, nevertheless, Wesley knew that, in the end, human freedom enabled by grace would make the final choice. In his sermon "On Family Religion," after instructing parents to teach and model Christianity thoroughly, he says, "Your son may nevertheless serve the devil if he will; but it is probable he will not."⁵¹ Compared to the behaviorists' term "predictable," Wesley's term "probable" must be appreciated when it comes to individual response to education and morality. It is now safe to say that when adopting

⁵⁰ B. F. Skinner is probably the most popular behaviorist today. His brand behaviorism declares, "It is the environment which acts upon the perceiving person, not the perceiving person who acts upon the environment." See B. F. Skinner, Beyond Freedom and Dignity (New York: Bantam/Vintage Books, 1971), 179.

⁵¹ Wesley, "On Family Religion," in Works, 3: 344.

behavioristic, pragmatic methodology Wesley is careful to maintain his belief in human beings as free moral agencies.

Christian education, for Wesley, means a whole process which makes people Christian, and helps them move toward Christian perfection. Such educational activity aims toward the radical transition of humanity from the fallen self to the sanctified self. The primary purpose of Wesley's Christian education was to restore the lost and deformed original image of God. When restoring fallen humanity, human faculties of the natural image are fully recovered in an unerring understanding of reality, an uncorrupt will to love God and neighbor, and perfect freedom to make oneself as the sole lord of one's own actions. This is what Wesley means by Christian perfection. Wesley saw Christian perfection as an ongoing process which requires devoted and diligent instruction and nurture in the setting of various groups. The fundamental educational ideas and principles conceived by Wesley are centered around the wholeness of humanity, including the cognitive, affectional, behavioral, and spiritual aspects of human life.

The educational methodology advocated by Wesley to achieve Christian perfection was to be both a cognitive process of didactic learning and a formative process of spiritual nurturing. As we noticed, the ultimate success of his revival movement required ongoing processes and institutions (groups) through which people were engaged in spiritual renewal, identity formation, and social transformation. Especially, for Wesley, Christian education aiming toward

Christian perfection, must be initiated and governed by the Holy Spirit because of his conviction that the Spirit of God is the guidance of the whole process of Christian perfection. Accordingly, Wesley's understanding of the nature, purpose, and method of Christian religious education is holistic.

Reflecting upon what we have discussed, we may conclude that Wesley's doctrine of humanity and his educational theory and practices are valuable for informing contemporary and future approach to religious education in the following senses. First, like T'oegye, Wesley reminds us that education is the primary instrument for encouraging people to grow continually and to grow in grace toward Christian perfection. Second, Wesley believed that religious education must be grounded on sound theological conceptions of the sinful nature of humanity and of the saving power of divine grace. Such theological views might provide us with a holistic picture of humanity which has been greatly unbalanced by modern social sciences. Third, Wesley believed that the goals of religious education must always include both the enhancement of cognitive knowledge and the encouragement of conversion and personal commitment to inward and outward holiness. Thus, Wesley affirms that Christian religious education is a holistic process which includes both the intellectual and affectional aspects of human faculties, and both the personal and social dimensions of salvation. Fourth, Wesley's deep involvement in the education of children challenges us to take increased responsibility for the spiritual and moral

development of the young. The crucial role of Christian family in this process must be recognized, and the church must also equip parents and other care takers for this task.

Chapter 8

Christian Religious Education for the Formation of Full Humanity

Two strong beliefs have undergirded this dissertation. First is the belief that philosophical and theological anthropology are significant in determining the theory and practice of Christian religious education. Second is the need for an organic and holistic view of humanity in designing the nature, purpose, and method of Christian religious education, especially in this age of painfully disconnected human experience. With such convictions in mind, we have explored a more organic and philosophically and theologically sound view of human beings as advocated by two thinkers, Yi T'oegye and John Wesley, and we have examined their educational theory and practices as influenced by their anthropologies.

In exploring the two traditions of T'oegye and Wesley, common features can be identified: (1) both thinkers believed in the perfectibility or transformative potential of human beings; (2) they both recognized that the existential human situation is problematic and in need of being restored to the original human nature; (3) they both maintained that the chief end of humanity is to attain a state of sagehood or Christian perfection (respectively); and (4) they both believed that education can be a means for guiding and encouraging people to grow toward that purpose. The shared insights are very promising. An anthropology based on T'oegye and Wesley can provide an insightful description of human nature, and

also directions concerning the nature, purpose, and methods of Christian religious education for the formation of full humanity.

Now we seek to integrate the wisdom of these two great thinkers. The primary purpose of this chapter is to propose theoretical ideas and practical proposals for a model of Christian religious education aiming toward the formation of full humanity. For that purpose, this chapter includes: (1) basic assumptions about human beings; (2) purposes of Christian religious education; (3) proposals for educational practice; and (4) concluding remarks.

Basic Assumptions about Human Beings

As noted, one of the fundamental issues in forming a model of Christian religious education is describing the nature of humanity. Some essential questions must be raised concerning human nature: Are persons capable of actualizing their potential?; “Are they relational or individualistic?”; “Are they static or changing?”¹ These questions cannot really be answered apart from exploring the nature of reality since “persons are part of the whole of creation.”² We, then, must add another question: “Is it [the nature of reality] a collection of isolated and unrelated entities or a web of interrelated entities?”³ Having reflected upon those

¹ Moore, 86.

² Ibid., 87.

³ Ibid.

questions with the wisdom of T'oegye and Wesley, the following assumptions about human nature may be concluded.

Person as a Self Capable of Actualization

As we discussed, T'oegye believed that human beings are born perfectly and essentially good by nature. In other words, for T'oegye, the original human nature, endowed by the Heavenly principle, is thought to be full of good and moral law; this is the state before feelings are aroused. Thus, although the original human nature has an ontological identification with the Heavenly principle, the existential human nature is seen as precarious and problematic. Human existence comprises the physical human nature combined with material force; the result is a rise of feelings and an involvement in good and evil.

In T'oegye's system of philosophical anthropology, feelings are the characters of existence. Existence is nature combined with material force, resulting in physical nature. Feelings arise in the conditions of existence, and the existential condition of the human being is material force, which occurs in the interaction of yin and yang. Thus, it is safe to say that, for T'oegye, the human being is an empirical self, which has fallen from its essence into existence with all of the limitations of ego-consciousness, desires, instincts, anxiety, etc. In this existential context, human beings are challenged to reverse the transition for the restoration of the original nature of humanity through moral self-cultivation. That is why

T'oegye put so much emphasis on the discipline of mind and also on the importance of education. This is T'oegye's basic understanding of humanity. For T'oegye, human beings have an innate moral law; therefore, they are absolutely capable to restore the original nature of humanity. Whether persons achieve it or not depends on their educational efforts in self-cultivation.

What about Wesley's view of humanity? To Wesley, is the person capable of actualizing his/her potential (the paradiselike original nature of humanity)? With the person alone, this is not possible; but with the power and guidance of divine grace, it is possible. For Wesley, the bias of nature is the wrong way; therefore, the primary task of education is to set it right. Education with the person alone is not strong enough to carry out its task; but education with the grace of God is good enough to do it. Consequently, in Wesley's view of humanity, no person is left helplessly in sin, and everyone can turn toward God through prevenient grace. Through faith, which is God's free gift, people can experience justification, and finally, sanctification (moving toward Christian perfection). In other words, God is active in the process of human salvation.

In light of Wesley's views of God and humanity, one would conclude that educational ministry of the church is by no means a human enterprise; rather it is human activity initiated and governed by God. If we accept this truth, educational activity aims toward the restoration of a deformed image of God and it must provide openness for the Holy Spirit to act upon the whole process of salvation.

Therefore, Parker Palmer's idea of prayer as "the practice of relatedness" must be included in educational activity.⁴ In practicing prayer and all of the means of grace, we touch the transcendent Spirit, who enables us to recognize our sinful nature. Through these practices and through the mysterious work of divine love, God works for, in and through us, justifying and sanctifying human life.

In conclusion, both T'oegye and Wesley believe that the human self is capable of its actualization, but Wesley stresses the initiative and necessity of God's action. From T'oegye, we receive an emphasis on disciplines of the mind and self-cultivation. From Wesley, we receive an emphasis on growing in grace, made possible by God's action and human response. Although these views are quite different and not fully compatible, they do offer complementary perspectives and values for guiding education.

Person as a Relational Self

In T'oegye's doctrines of cosmology and ontology, he poses an inner connection between all things. What Mencius called the "feeling of commiseration" is simply an expression of this connection between ourselves and other things. For T'oegye, an existential human being is a relational self; hence, to be is to be in relation. The true self is to be understood relationally. It often happens, however, that our feeling of commiseration is obscured by selfish desires.

⁴ Palmer, 124.

In other words, the root of all evil in Confucian ethics is self-centeredness or selfish desires that cause disorder and disruption in the interrelated human community; hence original unity is lost. What is necessary is simply to remember that, originally, oneness exists between oneself and all things, and to live with sincere and attentive concern for humanity, or with benevolence. If we treat others with the care and concern with which we treat ourselves, the original unity may be restored in due course; this is the Way of humanity by which a sage should live. In this regard, T'oegye states:

For the learning of the sages consists in the seeking of humanity. It is necessary to deeply inculcate in oneself the intention [of becoming humane], and then understand that one makes up a single body with heaven and Earth and the myriad creatures. And again, when one has fully attained to this, one will be a sage.⁵

For T'oegye, the true self is to be understood relationally; in his relational metaphysics, relation is real. In reality no separate individual self exists on its own; nor is there any separate, individual self. This relational concept is affirmed in the Neo-Confucian expression of “unity” or “oneness” of universe. This Neo-Confucian employment of “unity” or “oneness” is to be understood then as referring to a uniform ethical structure. In this context, the sage is the one who is keenly aware of this original structure. The sage also has a sense of propriety that

⁵ T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 57-58.

he/she bears toward Heaven, fellow human beings and all things; therefore, the sage acts with reverence and seriousness seeking for *in/jen*.

What about Wesley? For Wesley, the idea of the unity of humanity is a consequence of the unity of God. The guiding text on the unity of God is Mark 12:32.⁶ For Wesley, it is only because God is one that we can glimpse the oneness of rational creatures amid the vast diversities of human cultures. The personal and ethical expression of that centeredness is love for the neighbor (the tangible, particular other) which is itself a response to the love of God. Wesley's concept of Christian perfection also expresses a strong conviction in the unity of humanity and God. For Wesley, the goal of Christian life is perfect love for God; it is worship with the whole heart. To love God carries with it a challenge to love one's neighbor as oneself. Christian perfection, therefore, is two-dimensional--love of God and love of neighbor. Thus, in Wesley's theological system, persons are ontologically related to the Creator and to others.

Educationally, since persons are intrinsically and internally related to God, to others and to the world, they are able to influence others and be influenced by them. They enter into dialogue with others. According to Mary Elizabeth Moore, "This suggests a need to consider all aspects of a person's external and internal

⁶ Wesley, Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament, 181.

environment in planning [the educational activity].”⁷ Relationships, thus, influence all educational designs. In planning curriculum, “persons’ cognitive and affective developmental level must be seriously considered as well as their own cultural context and social relationships.”⁸ The learner’s present experience itself is the source of new knowledge, and not merely a means for active learning; the learner’s experience adds to the past heritage of knowledge. Because of this relationality, Thomas Groome advocates inductive approaches to education: “Beginning with the educational activity with the lived experience of the learner rather than with the content of knowledge to be taught, tends to lead to inductive or discovery models of teaching.”⁹ Since the self is inherently relational and communal, teaching and learning are a communal act; therefore, an active participation of both the teacher and the learner in sharing of their story and vision, and in reflecting on the biblical Story and vision, is strongly encouraged.

In conclusion, such relational teaching is compatible with the worldviews and educational theories as advocated by Yi T’oegye and John Wesley. They might do more than confirm these approaches, but also urge that all teaching engage people in reflecting on themselves in relation to family, community, larger society and

⁷ Moore, 113.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Groome, 8.

God. From T'oegye, we receive an emphasis on moral cultivation for appropriate social relationships with others. From Wesley, we receive an emphasis on people's active participation in social reform through the transformation of community and individual.

Person as a Self in Process

For T'oegye, the human being, as an existential being, is an empirical self, which is fallen from its essence into existence with all the limitations of ego-consciousness, desires, instincts, anxiety, etc. Human beings are challenged to reverse the transition and seek to restore the original nature of humanity. For T'oegye, education is the means for restoring the original nature and attaining sagehood; it is a life-long process. In that process, a high level of intellectual, affectional, moral, and spiritual discipline is required. Education or sage learning is the constant practice of reverential seriousness, which combines cognitive awareness of inherent moral laws, behavioral practices, and spiritual and meditative disciplines. It is not static; it is an on-going intellectual, moral, and spiritual journey starting from the beginning of life to the end of it.

Like T'oegye, Wesley's basic idea of human nature is focused on transformation: from the original perfection in God's image to the fall of that image, and from the fallen self to the sanctified self. For Wesley, even Christian perfection is not static, but is a continuous process. Salvation for Wesley is seen

as a lifelong process during which intentional training and nurturing in faith are essential at all ages and stages of spiritual growth.

Educationally, this assumption that people are selves in process suggest that people are never finished in their moment toward the fulfillment of full humanity. This view is compatible with Mary Elizabeth Moore's educational theory, recognizing that people have "the chance to transform themselves at all points of their lives."¹⁰ In this view, education is understood as a leading out activity, or what Thomas Groome describes as "an activity directed toward the future, toward a horizon beyond one's present limits and not yet realized."¹¹ This future dimension of education is a transcendent aspect of educational activity.

In conclusion, both T'oegye and Wesley believed that the ultimate transformation of humanity, aiming toward the original perfection in God's image or sagehood, is attainable. They also agreed that such a fulfillment of full humanity requires a lifelong and continuous process during which intentional and diligent training and nurturing in faith or self-cultivation are essential at all stages of growth. The idea that people are never finished in their growth toward the fulfillment of full humanity opens up the transcendent dimension of educational activity, i.e., what can be. On this subject, from T'oegye, we learn about his vision

¹⁰ Moore, 111.

¹¹ Groome, 6.

of the utopian world, projected in the perfection of the reigns of sage rulers Yao (2357?-2256? B. C.) and Shun (2255?-2206? B. C.).¹² For T'oegye, their reigns represented the ideal of wisdom and proper government. As he submitted Sunghak sipdo (Ten Diagrams on Sage Learning) to King Sunjo, he expressed his hope of again bringing about the perfection of the reigns of Yao and Shun to his country. T'oegye's vision of the utopian world is oriented to the physical world. From Wesley, we learn about his belief in the Kingdom of God. Quoting Paul's saying, Wesley stated, "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17).¹³ It is a state of the world to come. It enables a life of righteousness, peace, and joy, a blessed life that anticipates the bliss that is to come eternally for those who love the Lord.¹⁴ Wesley's depiction of the Kingdom of God, unlike T'oegye, is spiritual.

Holding the three assumptions concerning human nature together, it may be concluded that persons are capable, free, and responsible by prevenient grace; persons are relational by nature; and persons are in the process of forming their full humanity. Educational activity based on such assumptions is holistic; it goes beyond dichotomies of content versus student-centeredness, permissive versus strict discipline, cognitive versus affective emphases, inductive versus deductive

¹² T'oegye, To Become a Sage, 31.

¹³ Wesley, "The Way to the Kingdom," in Sermons, 124.

approaches, personal versus social attentions, human versus divine initiatives, and so on.

Purposes of Christian Religious Education

Through exploring and integrating the traditions of T'oegye and Wesley, we have outlined three assumptions about human nature. With such assumptions concerning human nature in mind, we now turn to define the purpose of Christian religious education for today and tomorrow.

We have discussed that human beings are suffering from the pain of disconnection even though we are part of an organic creation. The pain of disconnection can be seen in every aspect of human life—religious, cultural, political, economic, educational, and so on. When it affects our religious life, an estrangement emerges between Creator and creatures. In cultural life, racial, sexual, and social discriminations emerges. The consequences in political and economic are war and economic imperialism. In educational life, disconnection leads to a sense that no truth, no authentic teaching and learning, and accordingly no transformation are possible.

In an age of disconnection, each of us must consciously ask: what is the goal of humanity; what is the hope for educational formation of people? At different times in Christian history, different answers have been given to those questions. According to Thomas Merton, the ideal humanity in an age of disconnection is the

¹⁴ Ibid., 124-32.

one who recovers one's original nature and eventually restores one's original connection. Thereby, one would become "more whole, more human, more free, and more capable of loving."¹⁵

Both T'oegye and Wesley would agree with Merton since their own life long goal was to recover the complete and perfect original nature of humanity. Wesley would add that God intended such restoration with God, fellow human beings, and the non-human families of creation. Both T'oegye and Wesley wanted people to be more whole in their understanding of reality and more honest in recognizing the precarious human situation. Wesley also wanted people to be free to follow God's will, and more capable of loving regardless of their neighbor's social and cultural status.

Drawing from both figures, the purpose of Christian religious education proposed is the formation of full humanity. The formation of full humanity is a life-long and holistic process in which people of all ages are involved in their intellectual, moral, and spiritual cultivation to recover their original God-given nature and to restore organic relationships with their Creator, fellow human beings, and the natural world; the purpose is to participate in God's creation.

¹⁵ Thomas Del Prete, Thomas Merton and the Education of the Whole Person (Birmingham, Ala.: Religious Education Press, 1990), 6.

Educational Practices

Once we have defined the nature of educational activity and spelled out the purpose, the next step is to design an educational plan to achieve that goal. As noted in the beginning of this chapter, the primary goal of this study is not to explore particular techniques; the intention is to develop theoretical ideas and directions for practice. The following are initial thoughts about enhancing the formation of full humanity in Christian religious education.

Curriculum

Curriculum is a perennial concern for everyone who works in the field of education. The term “curriculum” is derived from the Latin verb *currere*, which means to run.¹⁶ In literal terms, a curriculum is a course to be run. Throughout the history of educational institutions, the literal notion has been generally called “a course of study,” “the content to be taught,” or “subject matter.” Some contemporary educational theorists have tried to extend its meaning. For example, Iris Cully calls it “all learning experiences.”¹⁷; John H. Westerhoff identifies the

¹⁶ Maria Harris, Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 55. In this book, Harris extends the meaning of curriculum by referring to the entire course of the church’s life.

¹⁷ Iris Cully, “Changing Patterns in Protestant Curriculum,” in Changing Patterns of Religious Education, ed. Marvin Taylor (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 220.

educative power of socialization as “hidden curriculum,”¹⁸ Elliot W. Eisner also extends the definition of curriculum by using the concepts of null curriculum and explicit curriculum and implicit curriculum.¹⁹ These contemporary theorists have tried to define curriculum as all of the experiences of the learner. Thus, in the broadest definition, curriculum includes both the subject matter to be taught and the experiences of learning.

In the context of Christian religious education for the formation of full humanity, as Mary Elizabeth Moore points out, curriculum must include both accumulated tradition of knowledge and present experiences.²⁰ Concerned with curriculum as the accumulated tradition, T'oegye believed that certain Confucian classics contain moral knowledge; thus, the proper reading and understanding of these classics would make the moral principles clear to learners. Similarly, Wesley upheld a classical education, like that offered in the schools of Greece and Rome. Thus, both T'oegye and Wesley were essentialists; they tended to conserve the accumulated wisdom of the ages and to transmit it the next generation.

¹⁸ John H. Westerhoff III, Will Our Children Have Faith? (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 16-19.

¹⁹ Elliot W. Eisner, The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1985), 97-107.

²⁰ Moore, 177.

Without such conservation and transmission, each generation would create something from nothing. In this educational view, the teacher's role is to make the tradition available to the learner.

If an accent is placed on accumulated tradition, a teacher must be equipped with skills in lecturing. On the other hand, if the teacher neglects the present experiences of the learner, "education is simply a matter of depositing information."²¹ As a result, learners are treated as passive receptacles. In such a setting, new knowledge cannot easily emerge, and the learner's creativity is stifled.

Concerned with the learner's present experiences as part of the educational curriculum, T'oegye said:

We may see the manifestation of the Heaven's Principle in/through every aspect of our life experiences. Its particularization's are in our doings and our non-doings as well; in our speech and in our silence as well. This Principle of the Way manifest itself only in our daily life experience.²²

This saying is significant because Heaven's Principle is seen as immanent in human nature and also in the affairs of daily life. T'oegye's students were required to seek for its particularization in their life experience; hence, their behavioral-moral cultivation was significant to education. For this reason, T'oegye gave primary concern to the experiential process of learning. In

²¹ Groome, 7.

²² Sa-soon Yun, Selected Writings of T'oegye, 66-67.

T'oegye's education system, curriculum included both the accumulated wisdom of ancient sages and the learner's present experience in daily life.

What about Wesley? In his educational plan, was the body of past knowledge his only concern; did he totally abandon the present dimension of learner's experience? As noted, Susanna Wesley strongly influenced Wesley. She was a skilled educator. She wrote and edited her own textbooks. She ran a strict school, largely with essentialistic principles, but her education was laced with parental love and highlighted by individualized instruction with tears and prayers for salvation. She devoted Thursday evenings to her son John. The boy was impressed with the one-to-one teaching and nurturing sessions and he urged a similar attentiveness to other's experiences through class-meetings and other human exchange, such as letter-writing.

In addition, the writings and schools of Comenius also humanized Wesley's education system. The daily schedules for Jena and Herrnhut were copied by Wesley for the Kingswood schedule, but there were differences. Wesley's children had to rise an hour earlier for an extra period of private prayer. Further, the Moravians had two daily sessions of walking in the woods to learn from nature, but Wesley decided that his children could get acquainted with nature even better through work; pulling weeds, cutting fire wood, and hoeing in the garden

were prescribed.²³ In short, Wesley encouraged some form of learning through experience.

In conclusion, both T'oegye and Wesley tried to hold the dialectical and dialogical dimension of curriculum, combining the accumulated tradition of past knowledge and the learner's present experience. With such an understanding of curriculum, they both conserved the accumulated wisdom of the ages and transmitted it to the next generation, without neglecting the importance of the learners' present experience as a source of new knowledge.

Pedagogy

Once the content of education is identified, the next concern is how to transmit this knowledge to learners. If we define transmission as a process which requires participation of both the teacher and the learners, then the remaining question is how and to what degree each party should participate in that process.

It is true that pedagogy is closely tied to the concept of humanity. If we agree that persons are capable, free, and responsible with the help of divine grace, that persons are relational by nature, and that persons are in the process of being

²³ For the details of the principles and rules for the Kingswood School and their comparison with the Moravian school Herrnhut, see Body, John Wesley and Education, 53; Wesley, "A Short Account of the School Kingswood, Near Bristol," in Works of John Wesley, 13: 283-302.

formed in their full humanity, then the following thoughts must be seriously considered in designing the teaching and learning process.

Human beings possess a capability, initiated and enabled by the divine grace, to actualize their potential for the formation of their full humanity. Christian religious education is then meant to realize the potential inherent in every human being, and consequently, the role of the teacher is to provide the proper environment, stimulus, and guidance to the students as they seek to fulfill their potential. The role of the student, thus, is not the passive reception of knowledge and skills through a training process, but a process of development through participation. The learner is part of the educational process. In the educational process, mutual interaction between the teacher and the learner must be enhanced; the educational setting is highly interactive. Two forms of learning are particularly implied by the worldviews of Yi T'oegye and John Wesley.

Learning by Experiencing in the Group Settings. Learning by experiencing becomes the fundamental motto of Christian religious education for the formation of full humanity. Here we can see the legitimacy of Wesley's educational methodologies in the group ministries of societies, classes, bands, and so on. Wesley's optimism about human potential for spiritual growth was expressed in this network of group ministries in which, with care and discipline, God's grace could be mediated and human nature perfected. Like the contemporary progressive educational theorists, Wesley believed that learning comes through

experience. The methods used in the class-meeting were various: sharing experience or testimony, hymn-singing, praying, and thanksgiving. The learning environments were wherever ten or twelve people could assemble: classrooms, homes, shops, attics, even coal bins. People shared with each other weekly accounts of their experiences. By doing so, they experienced spiritual renewal, identity formation, and social transformation.

Wesley's group ministries were focused not only on sharing, but also on action. Alfred North Whitehead's definition of experience comes close to Wesley's: "Experience is first of all doing something; then doing something that makes a difference; and finally knowing what difference it makes."²⁴ Wesley advocated learning by experiencing which resulted from obedience to the Word of God.

Wesley believed that these learning experiences had to be worked out in daily life, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, discovered through scripture and tradition. Each individual was seeking to grow toward Christian perfection through a daily spiritual journey. This explains why sharing of religious and daily experience was the main subject matter in class-meetings.

In addition, Wesley's contribution to social reform was in the form of community transformation. He did not radically resist social evil, but sought to

²⁴ Alfred North Whitehead, The Aims of Education and Other Essays (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1967), 10.

overcome social ills by changing individuals within the social system, and even restructuring the environment so that people could practice social goods. David Michael Henderson spells out that the class-meeting actually encouraged behavioral goals for the elimination of several social problems, such as alcoholism, smuggling, violence, deception in selling, and pawn brokering.²⁵

This fundamental educational principle in class-meetings assumes active participation and continuing interaction with the Holy Spirit, which is done in relation to scripture and with mutual support from one another. Such an interactive instructional and nurturing mode in the small group setting must be revitalized in designing educational activity.

As noted, T'oegye viewed a person as possessing an innate moral knowledge and a potential to follow moral law. In such an understanding of humanity, education was meant to realize this potential inherent in a person. Given this idea of education as a process of discovering truth by enhancing what was inherent, active dialogical participation in a learning process was strongly recommended by T'oegye. T'oegye's students, therefore, were encouraged to actively participate in sharing their own ideas and raising their questions with their teachers and fellow students as well. Thus, T'oegye's students were expected to explore and discover truth by active and continuous interaction with their teacher and fellow students.

²⁵ Ibid., 202.

In T'oegye's private academy (*sowon*), according to Chong Sun-mok, such an interactive mode of teaching and learning took place in small group settings and one-to-one meetings as well.²⁶

T'oegye firmly believed in the immanence of Heaven's Principle in the affairs of daily life; therefore, T'oegye's students were required to seek for its particularization in their life experience. For this reason, in T'oegye's education system, behavioral-moral cultivation and development was significant part of education, along with formal instruction. In short, T'oegye also encouraged some forms of the experiential process of learning and teaching in group settings.

Learning by Participating in the Means of Grace. Participating in the means of grace is another major educational approach in which persons are invited to experience the power of God's grace. It also helps people discern what they believe and how they live.

On this subject, John Wesley is far more helpful than Yi T'oegye. For Wesley, there were two systems in the means of grace which would promote spiritual growth toward the formation of full humanity. By the means of grace Wesley meant that "the ordinary channels whereby God might convey to men preventing,

²⁶ Sun-mok Chong, T'oegye eui kyouk chorhak (T'oegye's educational philosophy), 271-81.

justifying, or sanctifying grace.”²⁷ John Price distinguished Wesley’s definition of the means into “instituted means” and “prudential means.”²⁸ The instituted means were his primary focus, but he also felt God has chosen to work through the prudential means as well. The instituted means are: prayer, searching the scripture, the Lord’s Supper, fasting, and Christian conference.

The first instituted means of grace is prayer. He called prayer “the express direction of our Lord himself.”²⁹ At the heart was Wesley’s knowledge that all relationships—human and divine—require good communication. He recognized prayer as the means of that communication between God and human being. Accordingly, Wesley urged his people to be faithful in private and public prayer. His own life was a model of discipline and regularity in prayer. The hours of every day were undergirded and saturated with prayer. As a result, he experienced growth in grace.

The second instituted means of grace is what Wesley called, “searching the scripture.” He knew the power of the Bible. He referred to himself as a man of one book or *homo unius libri*, and he wanted the Methodists to be Bible

²⁷ Wesley, “The Means of Grace,” in *Sermons*, 160.

²⁸ John Price, *Wesley on Religious Education* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1926), 66-76.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 162.

Christians.³⁰ To aid his people in the use of the Bible, he compiled explanatory notes for both the Old and the New Testaments and made them available at a reasonable price. Wesley's emphasis on the primacy of the Bible was based on his conviction that, through the Bible, God gives, confirms, and increases true wisdom.

The third instituted means of grace is the Lord's Supper. As Wesley averaged communing once every four or five days, he exhorted early Methodists to practice constant communion. He was concerned for the Methodists to receive the sacrament at every opportunity because he believed that participation in the Lord's Supper was more than a symbol; it was an opportunity to commune with Christ and receive the grace of God.³¹ Wesley also believed that the sacrament had converting potential. Consequently, his invitation was open, extended to anyone who truly and earnestly repented of sin, was in love and charity with neighbor, and intended to lead a new life following the commandments of God.

The fourth instituted means of grace is fasting. As a regular practitioner of fasting, Wesley urged his people to keep a Friday of fasting.³² His intention was

³⁰ Wesley, Letters, 4: 299.

³¹ Wesley, "The Means of Grace," in Sermons, 165.

³² Price, 74.

not to see fasting as an act of mortification but in the commitment of time exclusively to God and spiritual concerns.

The fifth instituted means of grace is group fellowship, which Wesley called “Christian conference.” This became the primary instrument of the early Methodists revival movement. Wherever Wesley preached, he sought to organize believers into bands, classes, and societies for their continuing nurture.

In addition to these, Wesley recognized three prudential means of grace: doing no harm, doing all the good you can, and attending the private and public worship of God.³³ He used these means as conditions for continuing membership in the Methodist societies, and members were regularly examined to see how they were living up to such standards.

All the above activities were the mechanism which put people in touch with the dynamic power of God’s grace. All practices serve as contexts and methods to enable grace to become effective in what Christians believe and how they live.

Participating in the means of grace is a holistic educational approach which includes a cognitive process of didactic learning and a formative process of spiritual nurturing. It employs all of the human faculties—intellectual, affectional, moral and spiritual. It considers the content of the Gospel and both present and past experience as curriculum. It also helps people understand

³³ Ibid., 75.

Christianity as a body of belief and a lifestyle of practice, and it enables believers to seek for inward and outward holiness. By participating in these means of grace people are initiated and incorporated into Christian faith, aiming toward the formation of full humanity. The means of grace has a profound validity to claim their practical usefulness and formative power for the formation of full humanity.

Conclusion

As a concluding remark, I would like to share one story³⁴ which helps us grasp the whole picture of Christian religious education for the formation of full humanity. Once there was a bird with two heads. The two heads fought each other every day. One day, one head ate poisonous grass and felt severe pain in its stomach; at that moment, the other head complained of the same pain in its stomach. Through this experience, one head came to know that it could kill the other head if it would eat enough of that grass, so it ate the poisonous grass again. The other head died; at the very same moment, the first head, which intended to kill the other head, also died. They died together. This story points out the very organic nature of reality, namely, the interdependent and interrelated nature of reality.

One of the problems addressed by this dissertation is that modern humanity has

³⁴ This story was told by one of my friends who has been actively engaging in interreligious dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism.

fashioned itself around a cosmo-ontological fragmentation advocated by atomic physics and Darwinism. As a result of that, we have been experiencing the pain of disconnection. Through that pain, we have lost the sense of happiness which God originally intended for creation, and in turn, the divine enjoyment turned into regretfulness over the creation. This was the starting point for me to reconsider my educational praxis. I saw an urgent need for a more organic, relational, and communal view of human nature and cosmic reality.

Having scrutinized this issue, I became aware of the need for an organic and holistic vision for Christian religious education. That need can be fulfilled in the two foundational traditions (Korean Methodism and Neo-Confucianism) within which I have found the meaning of my life and activity. Both John Wesley and Yi T'oebye have provided me with a philosophically organic and theologically authentic view of humanity. Based on their views, this concluding chapter offers an integrative model of Christian religious education for the formation of full humanity.

The formation of full humanity as the primary goal of Christian religious education is seen as the process of restoring one's original human nature and recovering one's original connections with God, neighbors, and other beings of creation. It is also seen as a continuous process in which people seek to be more whole in understanding reality, more human in recognizing the sinful human nature, more aware of precarious human situations, more free to choose and

respond to problems without violating God's will, and more capable of loving, regardless of the neighbor's religio-socio-cultural status.

Concerned with the content of educational process, this model holds the dialectical tension between the accumulated knowledge of the past and the present experience of the learner. By doing so, it opens the future dimension of educational activity; thereby the learner participates in transforming the present and past towards what potentially can be.

Concerned with educational activity, this model is interactive by nature because the self in this model is inherently relational and communal. Teaching and learning are a communal act; therefore, active participation of teachers and learners in sharing their experiences is strongly encouraged. This model enhances mutual interaction, involving both teachers and learners and both communities and individuals. Accordingly, this model as "authentic education is not carried on by 'A' for 'B' or by 'A' about 'B,' but rather by 'A' with 'B.'"³⁵

Finally, it must be emphasized that this model is a meditative and spirit-centered approach because educational ministry is not human enterprise; it must be initiated and governed by the Holy Spirit. Christian religious education is based on the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not merely some mysterious "x" factor which completes a teaching learning process. The focus here is on how

³⁵ Freire, 82.

Christian religious educators and learners can participate with the Holy Spirit, rather than on how the Holy Spirit can participate with educational activity.

If the Holy Spirit is the effective agent which initiates and sustains the Christian spiritual life, and the Holy Spirit is the True Teacher who guides the whole process of the formation of full humanity, then Christian religious education should be an instrument of the Teaching Spirit. How can this model incorporate the divine activity in its educational process? The answer is a meditative approach. The voice of God and the voices of others must be heard in the educational process.

My own story illuminates the importance of silence, meditation, and prayer in the formation of full humanity. I was raised by my grandmother and mother in their meditative practice of the Christian faith. They were uneducated, and not very verbal. But they truly loved God, listened to the will of God, responded to the will of God, and expressed their trust and loyalty to the divine through silent meditation. Throughout their lives, they never ceased to practice early morning prayer. They got up at 4:00 a.m. and went to the church, and knelt down in front of the altar. There they would simply sit, wait, and listen to God. Through such a disciplined practice of silence and meditation, they have gained a knowledge of God (as the Creator), others (whom they serve and love), and themselves (as the subject, justified and sanctified by the divine grace). What is important to me is

that silence is a powerful opportunity for one to enter into dialogue with the divine, others, and oneself.

The practice of silence, meditation, and prayer is essential for fostering our relationship with God, others, and ourselves. Therefore, educational leaders who participate in the formation of full humanity will need to seek ways to provide silent time in worship and in learning experiences. In this meditative approach to Christian religious education, the teachers become a spiritual guide. They, by renewing their spiritual life, become a source for their students for finding the presence of God within themselves. They also have roles to inspire devotion, teaching how to meditate and pray. In order to perform that role, they themselves need to spend time in silence, listening and eventually discerning the movements of the Holy Spirit. Surely, a meditative approach is the most distinguishable character of an integrative model of Christian religious education for the formation of full humanity.

As noted earlier, T'oegye seriously committed himself to the practice of quiet sitting. It served as a meditative exercise to help one penetrate into the essence of one's nature; it was a contemplative, spiritual discipline that helped one's search for the original substance of human nature. Wesley also committed himself to the discipline and regularity in prayer because he believed that prayer served as the means of communication between God and human beings. Accordingly, he urged his people to be disciplined in the regimen of prayer. Both figures encouraged a

meditative approach to achieve their goals in education, aiming toward the formation of full humanity.

The integrative model of Christian religious education for the formation of full humanity proposed in this dissertation has been greatly shaped by anthropological views and educational ideas and practices of Yi T'oegye and John Wesley.

Although their ideas and practices are quite different, they offer integral insights and suggestions for guiding Christian religious education. The shared perspectives and values explored in this dissertation are organic and holistic in terms of the nature, purpose, content, and practices of Christian religious education for today and tomorrow.

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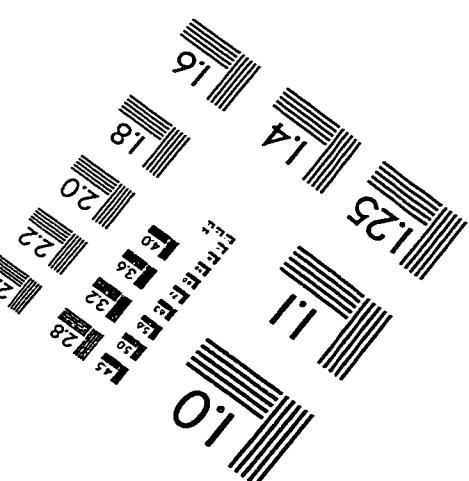
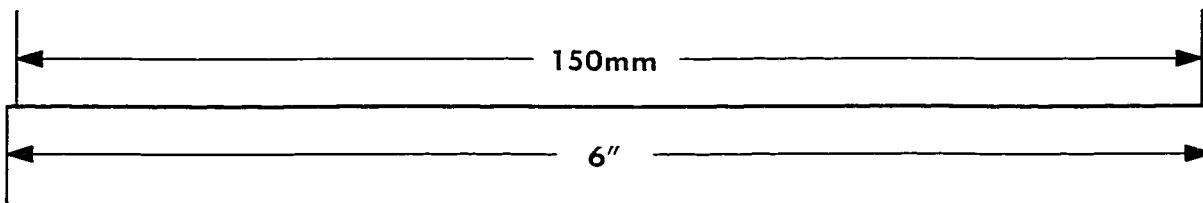
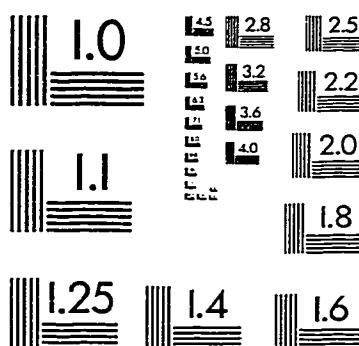
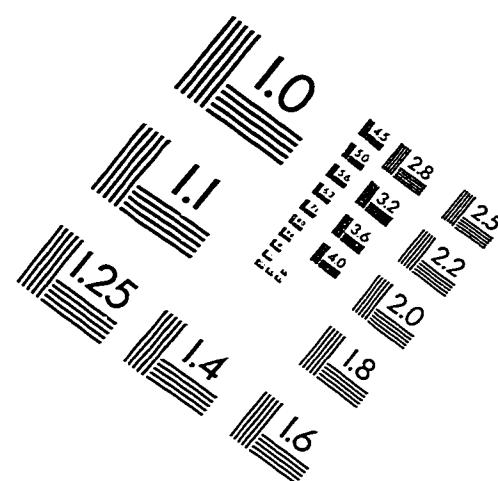
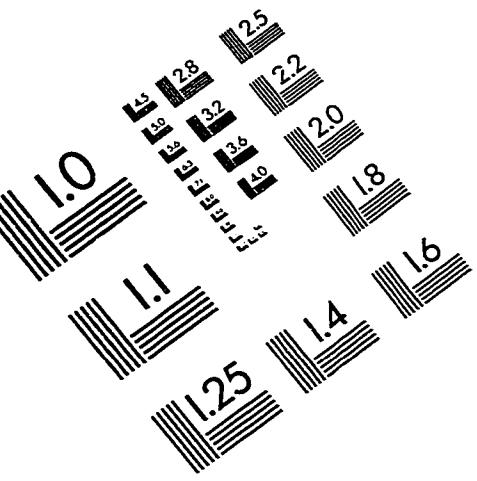
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